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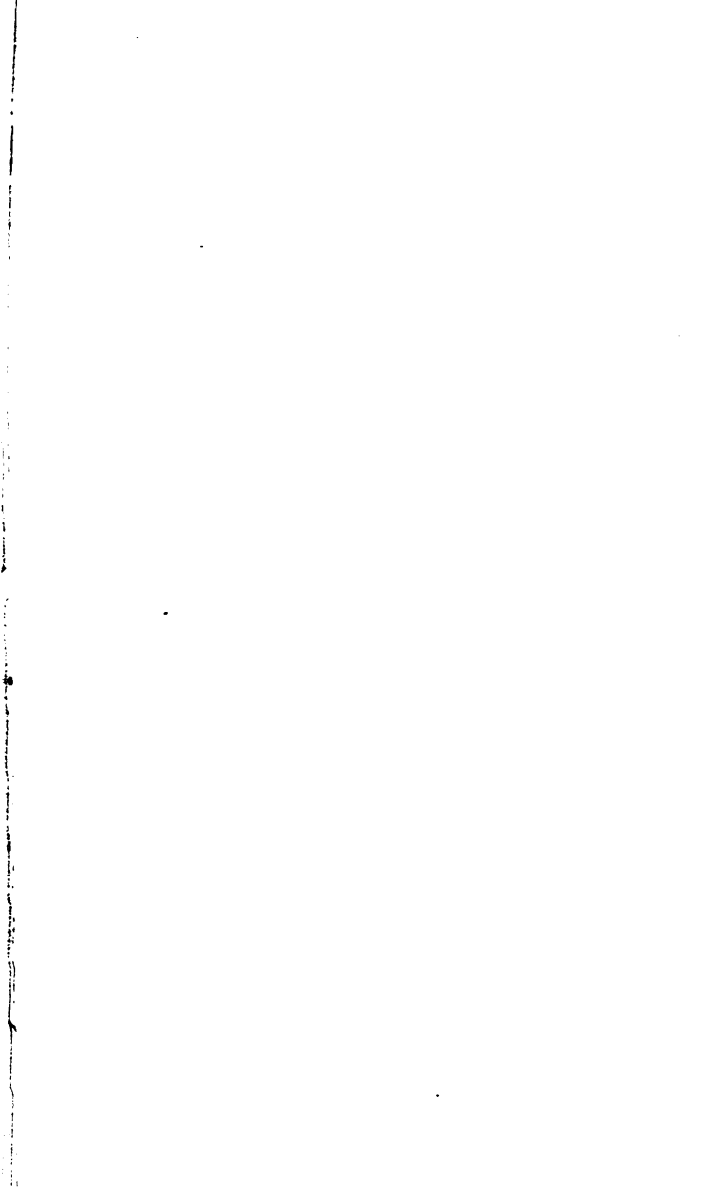
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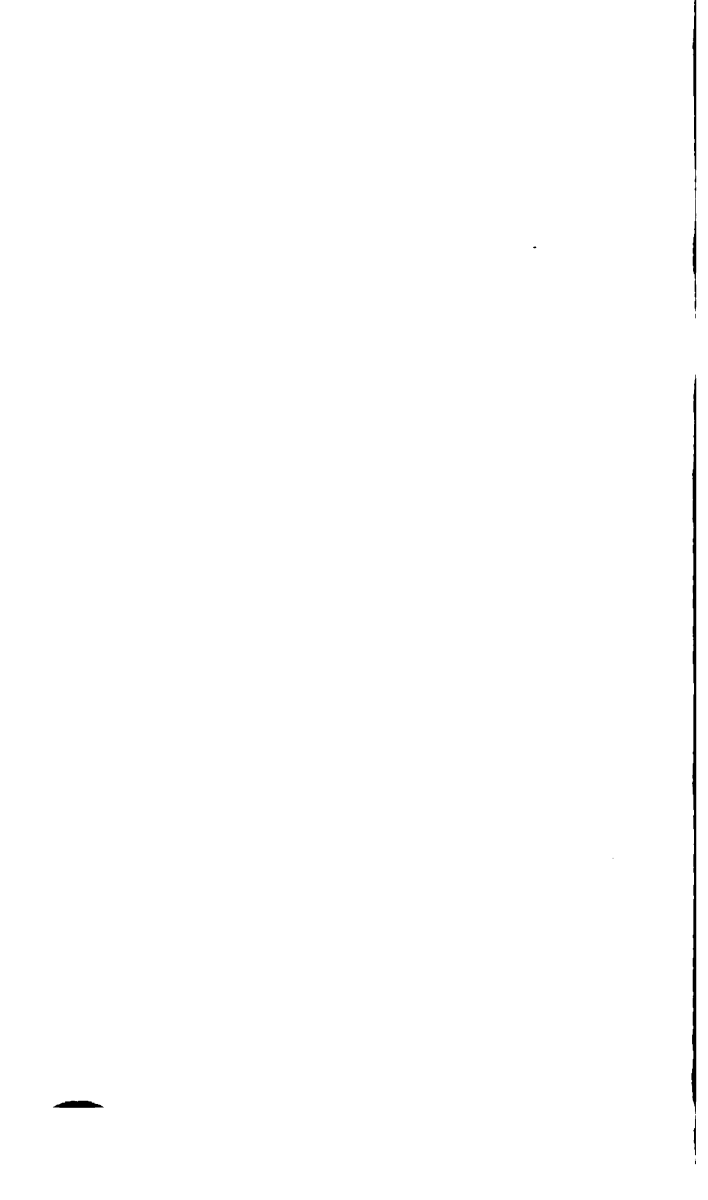


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MADOC,

by *W. M. L. 214*

Robert Southey.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1807.

W. M. L. 214
P. 10
1807

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WYMAN
WYMAN

MADOC.

by

Robert Southey.

OMNE SOLUM FORTI PATRIA.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1807

816



P R E F A C E.

THE historical facts on which this Poem is founded may be related in few words. On the death of Owen Gwyneth, king of North Wales, A. D. 1169, his children disputed for the succession. Yorwerth, the eldest, was set aside without a struggle, as being incapacitated by a blemish in his face. Hoel, though illegitimate, and born of an Irish mother, obtained possession of the throne for a while, till he was defeated and slain by David, the eldest son of the late king by a second wife. The conqueror, who then succeeded without opposition, slew Yorwerth, imprisoned Rodri, and hunted others of his brethren into exile. But

Madoc, meantime, abandoned his barbarous country, and sailed away to the West in search of some better resting place. The land which he discovered pleased him; he left there part of his people, and went back to Wales for a fresh supply of adventurers, with whom he again set sail, and was heard of no more. There is strong evidence that he reached America, and that his posterity exist there to this day, on the southern branches of the Missouri, retaining their complexion, their language, and, in some degree, their arts.

About the same time, the Aztecas, an American tribe, in consequence of certain calamities, and of a particular omen, forsook Aztlan, their own country, under the guidance of Yuhidthiton. They became a mighty people, and founded the Mexican empire, taking the

name of Mexicans, in honour of Mexitli, their tutelary god. Their emigration is here connected with the adventures of Madoc, and their superstition is represented as the same which their descendants practised, when discovered by the Spaniards. The manners of the Poem, in both its parts, will be found historically true. It assumes not the degraded title of Epic; and the question, therefore, is not whether the story is formed upon the rules of Aristotle, but whether it be adapted to the purposes of poetry.

Three things must be avoided in Poetry; the frivolous, the obscure, and the superfluous.

The three excellencies of Poetry; simplicity of language, simplicity of subject, and simplicity of invention.

The three indispensable purities of Poetry; pure truth, pure language, and pure manners.

Three things should all Poetry be; thoroughly erudite, thoroughly animated, and thoroughly natural.

Triads.

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COME LISTEN TO A TALE OF TIMES OF OLD!
COME, FOR YE KNOW ME. I AM HE WHO SUNG
THE MAID OF ARC, AND I AM HE WHO FRAMED
OF THALABA THE WILD AND WONDEROUS SONG.
COME LISTEN TO MY LAY, AND YE SHALL HEAR
HOW MADOC FROM THE SHORES OF BRITAIN SPREAD
THE ADVENTUROUS SAIL, EXPLORED THE OCEAN PATHS,
AND QUELL'D BARBARIAN POWER, AND OVERTHREW
THE BLOODY ALTARS OF IDOLATRY,
AND PLANTED IN ITS FANES TRIUMPHANTLY
THE CROSS OF CHRIST. COME LISTEN TO MY LAY!

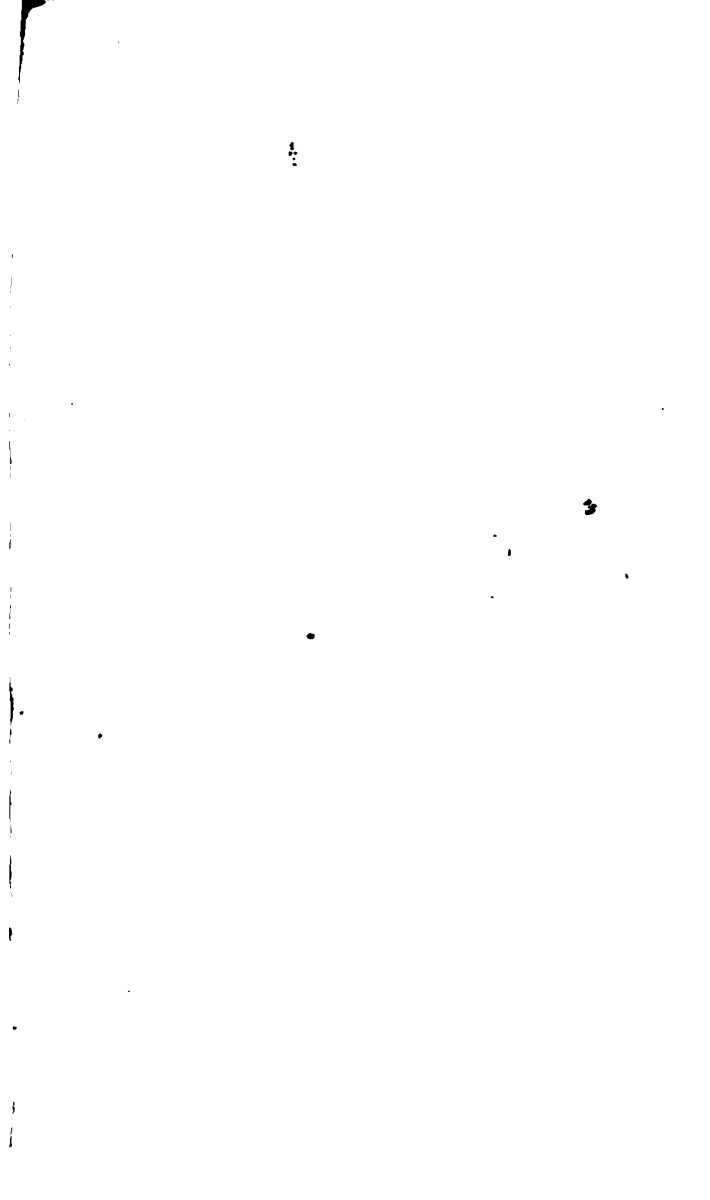


Madoc in Wales.

VOL. I.

B







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MADOC.

THE FIRST PART.

I.

Fair blows the wind, . . . the vessel drives along,
Her streamers fluttering at their length, her sails
All full, . . . she drives along, and round her prow
Scatters the ocean spray. What feelings then
Filled every bosom, when the mariners,
After the peril of that weary way,
Beheld their own dear country! Here stands one,
Stretching his sight toward the distant shore,
And, as to well-known forms his busy joy
Shapes the dim outline, eagerly he points
The fancied headland and the cape and bay,

I. 4

Till his eyes ache, o'erstraining. This man shakes
His comrade's hand, and bids him welcome home,
And blesses God, and then he weeps aloud :
Here stands another, who, in secret prayer,
Calls on the Virgin, and his patron Saint,
Renewing his old vows of gifts and alms
And pilgrimage, so he may find all well.
Silent, and thoughtful, and apart from all,
Stood Madoc ; now his noble enterprize
Proudly remembering, now in dreams of hope,
Anon of bodings full, and doubt and fear.
Fair smiled the evening, and the favouring gale
Sung merrily, and swift the steady bark
Rushed roaring through the waves.

The sun goes down.

Far off his light is on the naked crags
Of Penmanmawr, and Arvon's ancient hills ;
And the last glory lingers yet awhile,
Crowning old Snowdon's venerable head,
That rose amid his mountains. Now the ship
Drew nigh where Mona, the dark island, stretched
Her shore along the ocean's lighter line.
There through the mist and twilight, many a fire
Up-flaming, streamed upon the level sea
Red lines of lengthening light, which, far away

I. 5

Rising and falling, flashed athwart the waves.
Therewith did many a thought of ill disturb
Prince Madoc's mind : . . did some new conqueror seize
The throne of David ? had the tyrant's guilt
Awakened vengeance to the deed of death ?
Or blazed they for a brother's obsequies,
The sport and mirth of murder ? . . Like the lights
Which there upon Aberfraw's royal walls
Are waving with the wind, the painful doubt
Fluctuates within him. . . Onward drives the gale, . .
On flies the bark, . . and she hath reached at length
Her haven, safe from her unequalled way !
And now in louder and yet louder joy,
Clamorous, the happy mariners all-hail
Their native shore, and now they leap to land.

There stood an old man on the beach, to wait
The comers from the ocean ; and he asked,
Is it the prince ? And Madoc knew his voice,
And turned to him, and fell upon his neck ;
For it was Urien, who had fostered him,
Had loved him like a child ; and Madoc loved,
Even as a father loved he that old man.

My sister ? quoth the prince. . . Oh, she and I

L. 6

Have wept together, Madoc, for thy loss, . . .
That long and cruel absence! . . . She and I,
Hour after hour, and day by day, have looked
Toward the waters, and with aching eyes,
And aching heart, sate watching every sail.

And David, and our brethren? cried the prince,
As they moved on. . . . But then old Urien's lips
Were slow at answer; and he spake, and paused
In the first breath of utterance, as to chuse
Fit words for uttering some unhappy tale.
More blood, quoth Madoc, yet! Hath David's fear
Forced him to still more cruelty? Alas . . .
Woe for the house of Owen!

Evil stars,

Replied the old man, ruled o'er thy brethren's birth.
From Dolwyddelan driven, his peaceful home,
Poor Yorwerth sought the church's sanctuary;
The murderer followed! . . . Madoc, need I say
Who sent the sword? . . . Llewelyn, his brave boy,
Where wanders he? in this his rightful realm,
Houseless and hunted! richly would the king
Gift the red hand that rid him of that fear!
Ririd, an outlawed fugitive, as yet
Eludes his brother's fury; Rodri lives,

A prisoner he, . . I know not in what fit
 Of natural mercy, from the slaughter spared.
 Oh, if my dear old master saw the wreck
 And scattering of his house ! . . . that princely race !
 The beautiful band of brethren that they were !

Madoc made no reply, . . he closed his lids,
 Groaning ; but Urien, for his soul was full,
 Loving to linger on the woe, pursued :
 I did not think to live to such an hour
 Of joy as this ! and often, when my eyes
 Turned dizzy from the ocean, overcome
 With heavy anguish, Madoc, I have prayed
 That God would please to take me to his rest.

So as he ceased his speech, a sudden shout
 Of popular joy awakened Madoc's ear ;
 And calling then to mind the festal fires,
 He asked their import. The old man replied,
 It is the giddy people merry-making
 To welcome their new queen ; unheeding they
 The shame and the reproach to the long line
 Of our old royalty ! . . thy brother weds
 The Saxon's sister.

What ! . . in loud reply

Madoc exclaimed, Hath he forgotten all!
 David! King Owen's son . . . my father's son . . .
 He wed the Saxon . . . the Plantagenet!

Quoth Urien, He so doats, as she had dropt
 Some philtre in his cup, to lethargy
 The Briton blood, that came from Owen's veins.
 Three days his halls have echoed to the song
 Of joyaunce.

Shame! foul shame! that they should hear
 Songs of such joyaunce! cried the indignant prince.
 Oh that my father's hall, where I have heard
 The song of Corwen and of Keiriog's day,
 Should echo this pollution! Will the chiefs
 Brook this alliance, this unnatural tie?

There is no face but wears a courtly smile,
 Urien replied: Aberfraw's ancient towers
 Beheld no pride of festival like this,
 No like solemnities, when Owen came
 In conquest, and Gwalchmai struck the harp.
 Only Goervyl, careless of the pomp,
 Sits in her solitude, lamenting thee.

Saw ye not then my banner? quoth the Lord

Of Ocean ; on the topmast-head it stood
 To tell the tale of triumph ; . . . or did night
 Hide the glad signal, and the joy hath yet
 To reach her ?

Now had they almost attained
 The palace portal. Urien stopt and said,
 The child should know your coming ; 't is long
 Since she hath heard a voice that to her heart
 Spake gladness, . . none but I must tell her this !
 So Urien sought Goervyl, whom he found
 Alone, and gazing on the moonlight sea.

Oh you are welcome, Urien ! cried the maid.
 There was a ship came sailing hitherward . . .
 I could not see his banner, for the night
 Closed in so fast around her ; but my heart
 Indulged a foolish hope !

The old man replied,
 With difficult effort keeping down his heart,
 God, in his goodness, may reserve for us
 That blessing yet ! I have yet life enow
 To trust that I shall live to see the day,
 Albeit the number of my years well-nigh
 Be full.

Ill-judging kindness ! said the maid.

Have I not nursed for two long wretched years,
 That miserable hope, that every day
 Grew weaker, like a baby sick to death,
 Yet dearer for its weakness, day by day!
 No, never shall we see his daring bark!
 I knew and felt it in the evil hour
 When forth she fared! I felt it . . . his last kiss
 Was our death parting!

And she paused to curb
 The agony: anon, . . . But thou hast been
 To learn their tidings, Urien? He replied,
 In half-articulate voice, . . . they said, my child,
 That Madoc lived . . . that soon he would be here.

She had received the shock of happiness:
 Urien! she cried, . . . thou art not mocking me!
 Nothing the old man spake, but spread his arms,
 Sobbing aloud. Goervyl from their hold
 Started, and sunk upon her brother's breast.

Recovering first, the aged Urien said,
 Enough of this, . . . there will be time for this,
 My children! better it behoves ye now
 To seek the king. And, Madoc, I beseech thee,
 Bear with thy brother! gently bear with him,

My gentle prince! he is the headstrong slave
 Of passions unsubdued; he feels no tie
 Of kindly love, or blood; . . . provoke him not,
 Madoc! . . . It is his nature's malady.

Thou good old man! replied the prince, be sure
 I shall remember what to him is due,
 What to myself; for I was in my youth
 Wisely and well trained up; nor yet hath time
 Effaced the lore my foster-father taught.

Haste, haste! exclaimed Goervyl; . . . and her heart
 Smote her, in sudden terror, at the thought
 Of Yorwerth, and of Owen's broken house; . . .
 I dread his dark suspicions!

Not for me

Suffer that fear, my sister! quoth the prince.
 Safe is the straight and open way I tread!
 Nor hath God made the human heart so bad,
 That thou or I should have a danger there.
 So saying, they toward the palace-gate
 Went on, ere yet Aberfraw had received
 The tidings of her wanderer's glad return.

II.

The guests were seated at the festal board,
Green rushes strewed the floor; high in the hall
Was David; Emma, in her bridal robe,
In youth, in beauty, by her husband's side
Sate at the marriage feast. The monarch raised
His eyes, he saw the mariner approach;
Madoc! he cried; strong nature's impulses
Prevailed, and with a holy joy he met
His brother's warm embrace.

With that what peals
Of exultation shook Aberfraw's tower!
How then re-echoing rung the home of kings,
When from subdued Ocean, from the World
That he had first foreseen, he first had found,
Came her triumphant child! The mariners,
A happy band, enter the clamorous hall;
Friend greets with friend, and all are friends; one joy

Fills with one common feeling every heart,
 And strangers give and take the welcoming
 Of hand, and voice, and eye. That boisterous joy
 At length allayed, the board was spread anew,
 Anew the horn was brimmed, the central hearth
 Built up anew for later revelries.

Now to the ready feast! the seneschal
 Duly below the pillars ranged the crew;
 Toward the guests most honourable seat
 The king himself led his brave brother; . . . then,
 Eyeing the lovely Saxon as he spake,
 Here, Madoc, see thy sister! thou hast been
 Long absent, and our house hath felt the while
 Sad diminution; but my arm at last
 Hath rooted out rebellion from the land;
 And I have stablished now our ancient house,
 Grafting a scyon from the royal tree
 Of England, on the sceptre; so shall peace
 Bless our dear country.

Long and happy years
 Await my sovereigns! thus the chief replied,
 And long may our dear country rest in peace!
 Enough of sorrow hath our royal house
 Known in the field of battles, . . . yet we reaped
 The harvest of renown.

II. 14

Aye, . . . many a day,
David replied, together have we led
The onset! . . . Dost thou not remember, brother,
How, in that hot and unexpected charge
On Keiriog's bank, we gave the enemy
Their welcoming?

And Berwyn's after-strife!

Quoth Madoc, as the memory kindled him:
The fool that day, who in his masque attire
Sported before King Henry, wished in vain
Fitlier habiliments of javelin proof!
And yet not more precipitate that fool
Dropt his mock weapons, than the archers cast,
Desperate, their bows and quivers-full away,
When we leapt on, and in the mire and blood
Trampled their banner!

That, exclaimed the king,
That was a day indeed, that I may still
Proudly remember, proved as I have been
In conflicts of such perilous assay,
That Saxon combat seemed like woman's war.
When with the traitor Hoel I did wage
The deadly battle, then was I in truth
Put to the proof; no vantage-ground was there,
Nor famine, nor disease, nor storms to aid,

II. 15

But equal, hard, close battle, man to man,
Briton to Briton! By my soul, pursued
The tyrant, heedless how from Madoc's eye
Flashed the quick wrath like lightning, . . . though I knew
The rebel's worth, his prowess then excited
Unwelcome wonder! even at the last,
When stiff with toil and faint with wounds, he raised
Feebly his broken sword

Then Madoc's grief
Found utterance; Wherefore, David, dost thou rouse
The memory now of that unhappy day,
That thou shouldst wish to hide from earth and heaven?
Not in Aberfraw, . . . not to me this tale!
Tell it the Saxon! . . . he will join thy triumph, . . .
He hates the race of Owen! . . . but I loved
My brother Hoel, . . . loved him, . . . that ye knew!
I was to him the dearest of his kin,
And he my own heart's brother.

David's cheek
Grew pale and dark; he bent his broad black brow
Full upon Madoc's crimson countenance;
Art thou returned to brave me? to my teeth
To praise the rebel bastard? to insult
The royal Saxon, my affianced friend?

II. 16

I hate the Saxon! Madoc cried; not yet
Have I forgotten, how, from Keiriog's shame
Flying, the coward wreaked his cruelty
On my poor brethren! . . . David, seest thou never
Those eyeless spectres by thy bridal bed?
Forget that horror? . . . may the fire of God
Blast my right hand, or ever it be linked
With that accurst Plantagenet!

The while,

Impatience struggled in the heaving breast
Of David; every agitated limb
Shook with ungovernable wrath; the page,
Who chafed his feet, in fear suspends his task,
In fear the guests gaze on him silently;
His eyeballs flashed, strong anger choaked his voice,
He started up. . . Him Emma, by the hand
Gently retaining, held, with gentle words
Calming his rage; Goervyl, too, in tears
Besought her generous brother: he had met
Emma's reproaching glance, and, self-reproved,
While the warm blood flushed deeper o'er his cheek,
Thus he replied; I pray you pardon me,
My sister queen! nay, you will learn to love
This high affection for the race of Owen,
Yourself the daughter of his royal house,
By better ties than blood.

II. 17

Grateful the queen

Replied, by winning smile and eloquent eye
Thanking the gentle prince : a moment's pause
Ensued ; Goervyl, then, with timely speech
Thus to the wanderer of the waters spake :
Madoc, thou hast not told us of the world
Beyond the ocean and the paths of man ;
A lovely land it needs must be, my brother,
Or sure you had not sojourned there so long,
Of me forgetful, and my heavy hours
Of grief, and solitude, and wretched hope.
Where is Cadwallon ? for one bark alone
I saw come sailing here.

The tale you ask

Is long, Goervyl, said the mariner,
And I in truth am weary. Many moons
Have waxed and waned, since from the distant world,
The country of my dreams and hope and faith,
We spread the homeward sail : a lovely world,
My sister ! thou shalt see its goodness,
And greet Cadwallon there ; . . . but this shall be
To-morrow's tale : . . . indulge we now the feast ! . . .
You know not with what joy we mariners
Behold a sight like this.

Smiling he spake,

And turning, from the sewer's hand he took
 The flowing mead. David, the while, relieved
 From rising jealousies, with better eye
 Regards his venturous brother. Let the bard,
 Exclaimed the king, give his accustomed lay ;
 For sweet, I know, to Madoc is the song
 He loved in earlier years.

Then, strong of voice,
 The officer proclaimed the sovereign will,
 Bidding the hall be silent ; loud he spake,
 And smote the sounding pillar with his wand,
 And hushed the banqueters. The chief of Bards
 Then raised the ancient lay.

Thee, Lord! he sung,
 Father! the eternal ONE! whose wisdom, power,
 And love, . . . all love, all power, all wisdom thou!
 Nor tongue can utter, nor can heart conceive.
 He in the lowest depth of Being framed
 The imperishable mind ; in every change,
 Through the great circle of progressive life,
 He guides and guards, till evil shall be known,
 And, being known as evil, cease to be ;
 And the pure soul, emancipate by Death,
 The Enlarger, shall attain its end predoomed,
 The eternal newness of eternal joy.

II. 19

He left his lofty theme ; he struck the harp
To Owen's fame, swift in the course of wrath,
Father of heroes. The proud day he sung,
When from green Erin came the insulting host,
Lochlin's long burthens of the flood, and they
Who left their distant homes in evil hour,
The death-doomed Normen. There was heaviest toil,
There deeper tumult, where the dragon race
Of Mona trampled down the humbled head
Of haughty power ; the sword of slaughter carved
Food for the yellow-footed fowl of heaven,
And Menai's waters, burst with plunge on plunge,
Curling above their banks with tempest-swell,
Their bloody billows heaved.

The long past days

Came on the mind of Madoc, as he heard
The song of triumph ; on his sun-burnt brow
Sate exultation : . . other thoughts arose,
As on the fate of all his gallant house
Mournful he mused ; oppressive memory swelled
His bosom, over his fixed eyeballs swam
The tear's dim lustre, and the loud-toned harp
Rung on his ear in vain ; . . its silence first
Roused him from dreams of days that were no more.

III.

Then on the morrow, at the banquet board,
The Lord of Ocean thus began his tale.

My heart beat high, when, with the favouring wind,
We sailed away ; Aberfraw ! when thy towers,
And the huge headland of my mother isle,
Shrunk and were gone.

But, Madoc, I would learn,
Quoth David, how this enterprise arose,
And the strange hope of worlds beyond the sea ;
For, at thine outset, being in the war,
I did not hear from vague and common fame
The moving cause. Sprung it from bardic lore,
The hidden wisdom of the years of old,
Forgotten long ? or did it visit thee
In dreams, that come from heaven ?

The prince replied,

III. 21

Thou shalt hear all ; .. but if, amid the tale,
Strictly sincere, I haply should rehearse
Aught to the king ungrateful, let my brother
Be patient with the involuntary fault.

I was the guest of Rhys at Dinevawr,
And there the tidings found me, that our sire
Was gathered to his fathers : .. not alone
That sorrow came ; the same ill messenger
Told of the strife that shook our royal house,
When Hoel, proud of prowess, seized the throne
Which you, for elder claim, and lawful birth,
Challenged in arms. With all a brother's love,
I, on the instant, hurried to prevent
The impious battle : .. all the day I sped,
Night did not stay me on my eager way ...
Where'er I passed, new rumour raised new fear ...
Midnight, and morn, and noon I hurried on,
And the late eve was darkening when I reached
Arvon, the fatal field. .. The sight, the sounds,
Live in my memory now, .. for all was done!
For horse and horseman, side by side in death,
Lay on the bloody plain ; .. a host of men,
And not one living soul, .. and not one sound,
One human sound, .. only the raven's wing,

III. 22

Which rose before my coming, and the neigh
Of wounded horses, wandering o'er the plain.

Night now was closing in ; a man approached,
And bade me to his dwelling nigh at hand.
Thither I turned, too weak to travel on ;
For I was overspent with weariness,
And, having now no hope to bear me up,
Trouble and bodily labour mastered me.
I asked him of the battle : . . who had fallen
He knew not, nor to whom the lot of war
Had given my father's sceptre. Here, said he,
I came to seek if haply I might find
Some wounded wretch, abandoned else to death.
My search was vain, the sword of civil war
Had bit too deeply.

Soon we reached his home,
A lone and lowly dwelling in the hills,
By a grey mountain stream. Beside the hearth
There sate an old blind man ; his head was raised
As he were listening to the coming sounds,
And in the fire-light shone his silver locks.
Father, said he who guided me, I bring
A guest to our poor hospitality ;
And then he brought me water from the brook,

III. 23

And homely fare, and I was satisfied :
That done, he piled the hearth, and spread around
The rushes of repose. I laid me down ;
But, worn with toil, and full of many fears,
Sleep did not visit me : the quiet sounds
Of nature troubled my distempered sense ;
My ear was busy with the stirring gale,
The moving leaves, the brook's perpetual flow.

So on the morrow languidly I rose,
And faint with fever : but a restless wish
Was working in me, and I said, My host,
Wilt thou go with me to the battle-field,
That I may search the slain ? for in the fray
My brethren fought ; vainly, with all my speed,
I strove to reach them ere the strife began.
Alas, I sped too slow !

Grievest thou for that ?

He answered, grievest thou that thou art spared
The shame and guilt of that unhappy strife,
Briton with Briton in unnatural war ?

Nay, I replied, mistake me not ! I came
To reconcile the chiefs ; they might have heard
Their brother's voice.

Fearless he was, . . . the Saxon proved him so ;
 Wise was his counsel, and no supplicant
 For justice ever from his palace-gate
 Unrighted turned away. King Owen's name
 Shall live in the after-world without a blot !

There were two brethren once, of kingly line,
 The old man replied ; they loved each other well,
 And when the one was at his dying hour,
 It then was comfort to him that he left
 So dear a brother, who would duly pay
 A father's duties to his orphan boy.
 And sure he loved the orphan, and the boy,
 With all a child's sincerity, loved him,
 And learnt to call him father : so the years
 Went on, till, when the orphan gained the age
 Of manhood, to the throne his uncle came.
 The young man claimed a fair inheritance,
 His father's lands ; and . . . mark what follows, prince !
 At midnight he was seized, and to his eyes
 The brazen plate was held. . . . He looked around
 His prison-room for help, . . . he only saw
 The ruffian forms, who to the red-hot brass
 Forced his poor eyes, and held the open lids,
 Till the long agony consumed the sense ;

III. 26

And when their hold relaxed, it had been worth
The wealth of worlds if he could then have seen
Their ruffian faces! . . . I am blind, young prince,
And I can tell how sweet a thing it is
To see the blessed light!

Must more be told?

What farther agonies he yet endured?
Or hast thou known the consummated crime,
And heard Cynetha's fate?

A painful glow

Inflamed my cheek, and for my father's crime,
I felt the shame of guilt. The dark-browed man
Beheld the burning flush, the uneasy eye,
That knew not where to rest. Come! we will search
The slain! arising from his seat, he said.
I followed; to the field of fight we went,
And over steeds, and arms, and men, we held
Our way in silence. Here it was, quoth he,
The fiercer war was waged; lo! in what heaps
Man upon man fell slaughtered! Then my heart
Smote me, and my knees shook; for I beheld
Where, on his conquered foemen, Hoel lay.

He paused, his heart was full, and on his tongue
The imperfect utterance died; a general gloom

III. 27

Saddened the hall, and David's cheek grew pale.
Commanding first his nature, Madoc broke
The oppressive silence.

Then Cadwallon took
My hand, and, pointing, to his dwelling, cried,
Prince, go and rest thee there, for thou has need
Of rest; . . . the care of sepulture be mine.
Nor did I then comply, refusing rest,
Till I had seen in holy ground inearthed
My poor lost brother. Wherefore, he exclaimed,
(And I was awed by his severer eye)
Wouldst thou be pampering thy distempered mind?
Affliction is not sent in vain, young man,
From that good God, who chastens whom he loves!
Oh! there is healing in the bitter cup!
Go yonder, and before the unerring will
Bow, and have comfort! To the hut I went,
And there, beside the lonely mountain-stream,
I veiled my head, and brooded on the past.

He tarried long; I felt the hours pass by,
As in a dream of morning, when the mind,
Half to reality awakened, blends
With airy visions and vague phantasies
Her dim perception; till at length his step

III. 28

Aroused me, and he came. I questioned him,
Where is the body? hast thou bade the priests
Perform due masses for his soul's repose?

He answered me, The rain and dew of heaven
Will fall upon the turf that covers him,
And greener grass shall flourish on his grave.
But rouse thee, prince! there will be hours enough
For mournful memory; .. it befits thee now
Take counsel for thyself: .. the son of Owen
Lives not in safety here.

I bowed my head,
Oppressed by heavy thoughts : all wretchedness
The present; darkness on the future lay;
Fearful and gloomy both. I answered not.

Hath power seduced thy wishes? he pursued,
And wouldst thou seize upon thy father's throne?

Now God forbid! quoth I. Now God forbid!
Quoth he; .. but thou art dangerous, prince! and what
Shall shield thee from the jealous arm of power?
Think of Cynetha! .. the unsleeping eye
Of justice hath not closed upon his wrongs; ...
At length the avenging arm is gone abroad, ..

III. 29

One woe is past, .. woe after woe comes on, ..
There is no safety here, .. here thou must be
The victim or the murderer! Does thy heart
Shrink from the alternative? .. look round! .. behold
What shelter, .. whither wouldst thou fly for peace?
What if the asylum of the church were safe, ..
Were there no better purposes ordained
For that young arm; that heart of noble hopes?
Son of our kings, .. of old Cassibelan,
Great Caratach, immortal Arthur's line ...
Oh, shall the blood of that heroic race
Stagnate in cloister sloth? .. Or wouldst thou leave
Thy native isle, and beg, in awkward phrase,
Some foreign sovereign's charitable grace, ..
The Saxon or the Frank, .. and earn his gold,
The hireling in a war whose cause thou knowest not,
Whose end concerns not thee?

I sate and gazed,
Following his eye with wonder, as he paced
Before me to and fro, and listening still,
Though now he paced in silence. But anon,
The old man's voice and step awakened us,
Each from his thought; I shall come out, said he,
That I may sit beside the brook, and feel
The comfortable sun. As he came forth,

III. 30

I could not choose but look upon his face :
Gently on him had gentle nature laid
The weight of years ! all passions that disturb
Were past away ; the stronger lines of grief
Softened and settled, till they told of grief
By patient hope and piety subdued.
His eyes, which had their hue and brightness left,
Fixed lifelessly, or objectless they rolled,
Nor moved by sense, nor animate with thought.
On a smooth stone, beside the stream, he took
His wonted seat in the sunshine. Thou hast lost
A brother, prince, he cried, .. or the dim ear
Of age deceived me. Peace be with his soul !
And may the curse that lies upon the house
Of Owen turn away ! wilt thou come hither,
And let me feel thy face ? .. I wondered at him ;
Yet, while his hand perused my lineaments,
Deep awe and reverence filled me. O my God,
Bless this young man ! he cried ; a perilous state
Is his ; .. but let not thou his father's sins
Be visited on him !

I raised my eyes,
Enquiring, to Cadwallon : Nay, young prince,
Despise not thou the blind man's prayer ! he cried ;
It might have given thy father's dying hour

III. 31

A hope, that sure he needed! . . for, know thou,
It is the victim of thy father's crime,
Who asks a blessing on thee!

At his feet

I fell, and claspt his knees : he raised me up ; ..
Blind as I was, a mutilated wretch,
A thing that nature owns not, I survived,
Loathing existence, and, with impious voice,
Accused the will of heaven, and groaned for death.
Years past away : this universal blank
Became familiar, and my soul reposed
On God, and I had comfort in my prayers.
But there were blessings for me yet in store :
Thy father knew not, when his bloody fear
All hope of an avenger had cut off,
How there existed then an unborn babe,
Child of my lawless love. Year after year
I lived, a lonely and forgotten wretch,
Before Cadwallon knew his father's fate,
Long years and years before I knew my son ;
For never, till his mother's dying hour,
Learnt he his dangerous birth. He sought me then ;
He woke my soul once more to human ties : . .
I hope he hath not weaned my heart from heaven,
Life is so precious now ! . . .

III. 32

Dear good old man!

And lives he still? Goervyl cried, in tears.
Madoc replied, I scarce can hope to find
A father's welcome at my distant home.
I left him full of days, and ripe for death ;
And the last prayer Cynetha breathed upon me
Went like a death-bed blessing to my heart!

When evening came, toward the echoing shore
I and Cadwallon walked together forth :
Bright with dilated glory shone the west ;
But brighter lay the ocean-flood below,
The burnished silver sea, that heaved and flashed
Its restless rays, intolerably bright.
Prince, quoth Cadwallon, thou hast rode the waves
In triumph, when the invaders felt thine arm.
Oh what a nobler conquest might be won
There, upon that wide field! . . What meanest thou?
I cried. . . . That yonder waters are not spread
A boundless waste, a bourn impassable, . . .
That Man should rule the Elements, . . that there
Might manly courage, manly wisdom find
Some happy isle, some undiscovered shore,
Some resting place for peace. . . Oh that my soul
Could seize the wings of Morning! soon would I

III. 33

Behold that other world, where yonder sun
Speeds now, to dawn in glory!

As he spake,

Conviction came upon my startled mind,
Like lightning on the midnight traveller.
I caught his hand ; . . Kinsman, and guide, and friend,
Yea, let us go together ! Down we sate,
Full of the vision on the echoing shore.
One only object filled ear, eye, and thought :
We gazed upon the awful world of waves,
And talked and dreamt of years that were to come.

IV.

Not with a heart unmoved I left thy shores,
Dear native isle ! oh . . . not without a pang,
As thy fair uplands lessened on the view,
Cast back the long involuntary look !

The morning cheered our outset ; gentle airs
Curled the blue deep, and bright the summer sun
Played o'er the summer ocean, when our barks
Began their way.

And they were gallant barks,
As ever through the raging billows rode !
And many a tempest's buffeting they bore.
Their sails all swelling with the eastern breeze,
Their tightened cordage clattering to the mast,
Steady they rode the main ; the gale aloft
Sung in the shrouds, the sparking waters hissed
Before, and frothed, and whitened far behind.
Day after day, with one auspicious wind,

IV. 35

Right to the setting sun we held our way.
My hope had kindled every heart ; they blest
The unvarying breeze, whose unabating strength
Still sped us onward ; and they said that heaven
Favoured the bold emprise.

How many a time,
Mounting the mast-tower-top, with eager ken
They gazed, and fancied, in the distant sky,
Their promised shore beneath the evening cloud,
Or seen, low lying, through the haze of morn.
I, too, with eyes as anxious, watched the waves,
Though patient, and prepared for long delay ;
For not on wild adventure had I rushed,
With giddy speed, in some delirious fit
Of fancy ; but, in many a tranquil hour,
Weighed well the attempt, till hope matured to faith.
Day after day, day after day, the same, . .
A weary waste of waters ! still the breeze
Hung heavy in our sails, and we held on
One even course ; a second week was gone,
And now another past, and still the same,
Waves beyond waves, the interminable sea !
What marvel, if at length the mariners
Grew sick with long expectance ? I beheld
Dark looks of growing restlessness, I heard

IV. 36

Distrust's low murmuring ; nor availed it long
To see and not perceive. Shame had awhile
Represt their fear, till, like a smothered fire,
It burst, and spread with quick contagion round,
And strengthened as it spread. They spake in tones
Which might not be mistaken ; . . they had done
What men dared do, ventured where never keel
Had cut the deep before ; still all was sea,
The same unbounded ocean ! . . to proceed
Were tempting heaven.

I heard, with feigned surprise,
And, pointing then to where our fellow bark,
Gay with her fluttering streamers and full sails
Rode as in triumph, o'er the element,
I asked them what their comrades there would deem
Of those so bold ashore, who, when a day,
Perchance an hour, might crown their glorious toil,
Shrunk then, and, coward-like, returned to meet
Mockery and shame ? true, they had ventured on
In seas unknown, beyond where ever man
Had ploughed the billows yet : more reason so
Why they should now, like him whose happy speed
Well nigh hath run the race, with higher hope
Press onward to the prize. But late they said,
Marking the favour of the steady gale,

IV. 37

That heaven was with us ; heaven vouchsafed us still
Fair seas and favouring skies ; nor need we pray
For other aid, the rest was in ourselves ;
Nature had given it, when she gave to man
Courage and constancy.

They answered not,
Awhile obedient ; but I saw, with dread,
The silent sullenness of cold assent.
Then, with what fearful eagerness I gazed,
At earliest daybreak, o'er the distant deep !
How sick at heart with hope, when evening closed,
Gazed through the gathering shadows ! . . . but I saw
The sun still sink below the endless waves,
And still at morn, beneath the farthest sky,
Unbounded ocean heaved. Day after day,
Before the steady gale we drove along, . .
Day after day ! The fourth week now had past ;
Still all around was sea, . . the eternal sea !
So long that we had voyaged on so fast,
And still at morning where we were at night,
And where we were at morn, at nightfall still,
The centre of that drear circumference,
Progressive, yet no change ! . . almost it seemed
That we had past the mortal bounds of space,
And speed was toiling in infinity.

IV. 38

My days were days of fear, my hours of rest
 Were like a tyrant's slumber. Sullen looks,
 Eyes turned on me, and whispers meant to meet
 My ear, and loud despondency, and talk
 Of home, now never to be seen again, ..
 I suffered these, dissembling as I could,
 Till that availed no longer. Resolute,
 The men came round me : .. They had shewn enough
 Of courage now, enough of constancy ;
 Still to pursue the desperate enterprize
 Were impious madness ! they had deemed, indeed,
 That heaven in favour gave the unchanging gale ; ..
 More reason now to think offended God,
 When man's presumptuous folly strove to pass
 The fated limits of the world, had sent
 The winds, to waft us to the death we sought.
 Their lives were dear, they bade me know, and they
 Many, and I, the obstinate, but one.
 With that, attending no reply, they hailed
 Our fellow bark, and told their fixed resolve.
 A shout of joy approved. Thus, desperate now,
 I sought my solitary cabin ; there,
 Confused with vague tumultuous feeling, lay,
 And, to remembrance and reflection lost,
 Knew only I was wretched.

IV. 39

Thus entranced,
Cadwallon found me; shame, and grief, and pride,
And baffled hope, and fruitless anger swelled
Within me. All is over! I exclaimed;
Yet not in me, my friend, hath time produced
These tardy doubts and shameful fickleness.
I have not failed, Cadwallon! Nay, he cried,
The coward fears which persecuted me
Have shown what thou hast suffered. We have yet
One hope. . . I prayed them to proceed a day, . .
But one day more; . . this little have I gained,
And here will wait the issue; in yon bark
I am not needed, . . they are masters there.

One only day! . . The gale blew strong, the bark
Sped through the waters; but the silent hours,
That make no pause, went by, and, centered still,
We saw the dreary vacancy of heaven
Close round our narrow view, when that brief term,
The last poor respite of our hopes, expired.
They shortened sail and called with coward prayer,
For homeward winds. Why, what poor slaves are we!
In bitterness I cried; the sport of chance;
Left to the mercy of the elements,
Or the more wayward will of such as these,
Blind tools and victims of their destiny!

IV. 40

Yea, Madoc ! he replied, the elements
Master, indeed, the feeble powers of man !
Not to the shores of Cambria will thy ships
Win back their shameful way ! . . or HE, whose will
Unchains the winds, hath bade them minister
To aid us, when all human hope was gone,
Or we shall soon eternally repose
From life's long voyage.

As he spake, I saw
The clouds hang thick and heavy o'er the deep ;
And heavily, upon the long slow swell,
The vessel laboured on the labouring sea.
The reef-points rattled on the shivering sail ;
At fits, the sudden gust howled ominous,
Anon, with unremitting fury raged ;
High rolled the mighty billows, and the blast
Swept from their sheeted sides the showery foam.
Vain, now, were all the seamen's homeward hopes,
Vain all their skill ! . . we drove before the storm.

'Tis pleasant, by the chearful hearth, to hear
Of tempests, and the dangers of the deep,
And pause at times, and feel that we are safe ;
Then listen to the perilous tale again,
And, with an eager and suspended soul,
Woo Terror to delight us ; . . but to hear

IV. 41

The roaring of the raging elements, . .
To know all human skill, all human strength,
Avail not, . . to look round, and only see
The mountain wave incumbent, with its weight
Of bursting waters, o'er the reeling bark, . . .
O God, this is indeed a dreadful thing!
And he who hath endured the horror, once,
Of such an hour, doth never hear the storm
Howl round his home, but he remembers it,
And thinks upon the suffering mariner!

Onward we drove : with unabating force
The tempest raged ; night added to the storm
New horrors, and the morn arose, o'erspread
With heavier clouds. The weary mariners
Called on Saint Cyric's aid, and I, too, placed
My hope on heaven, relaxing not the while
Our human efforts. Ye, who dwell at home,
Ye do not know the terrors of the main !
When the winds blow, ye walk along the shore,
And, as the curling billows leap and toss,
Fable that Ocean's mermaid Shepherdess
Drives her white flocks afield, and warus in time
The wary fisherman. Gwenhidwy warned us
When we had no retreat ! my secret heart

IV. 42

Almost had failed. . . Were the Elements
Confounded in perpetual conflict here,
Sea, Air, and Heaven? Or were we perishing
Where at their source the Floods, for ever thus,
Beneath the nearer influence of the Moon,
Labour'd in these mad workings? Did the Waters
Here on their outmost circle meet the Void,
The verge and brink of Chaos? or this Earth, . .
Was it indeed a living thing, . . its breath
The ebb and flow of Ocean? and had we
Reached the storm-rampart of its Sanctuary,
The insuperable boundary, raised to guard
Its mysteries from the eye of man profane?

Three dreadful nights and days we drove along;
The fourth, the welcome rain came rattling down:
The wind had fallen, and through the broken cloud
Appeared the bright dilating blue of heaven.
Emboldened now, I called the mariners: . .
Vain were it, should we bend a homeward course,
Driven by the storm so far: they saw our barks,
For service of that long and perilous way,
Disabled, and our food belike to fail.
Silent they heard, reluctant in assent;
Aton, they shouted joyfully, . . I looked,

IV. 43

And saw a bird slow sailing overhead,
His long white pinions by the sunbeam edged,
As though with burnished silver ; . . never yet
Heard I so sweet a music as his cry !

Yet three days more, and hope more eager now,
Sure of the signs of land, . . weed-shoals, and birds
Who flocked the main, and gentle airs, that breathed,
Or seemed to breathe, fresh fragrance from the shore.
On the last evening, a long shadowy line
Skirted the sea ; . . how fast the night closed in !
I stood upon the deck, and watched till dawn.
But who can tell what feelings filled my heart,
When, like a cloud, the distant land arose
Grey from the ocean, . . when we left the ship,
And cleft, with rapid oars, the shallow wave,
And stood triumphant on another world !

V.

Madoc had paused awhile ; but every eye
Still watched his lips, and every voice was hushed.
Soon as I leapt ashore, pursues the Lord
Of Ocean, prostrate on my face I fell,
Kissed the dear earth, and prayed with thankful tears.
Hard by, a brook was flowing ; .. never yet,
Even from the gold-tipt horn of victory,
With harp and song, amid my father's hall,
Pledged I so sweet a draught, as lying there,
Beside that streamlet's brink ! .. to feel the ground,
To quaff the cool clear water, to inhale
The breeze of land, while fears and dangers past
Recurred, and heightened joy, as summer storms
Make the fresh evening lovelier !

To the shore
The natives thronged ; astonished, they beheld
Our winged barks, and gazed in wonderment

On the strange garb, and bearded countenance,
 And skin so white, in all unlike themselves.
 I see with what enquiring eyes you ask
 What men were they: of dark-brown colour, tinged
 With sunny redness; wild of eye; their brows
 So smooth, as never yet anxiety,
 Nor busy thought, had made a furrow there;
 Beardless, and each to each of lineaments
 So like, they seemed but one great family.
 Their loins were loosely cinctured, all beside
 Bare to the sun and wind; and thus their limbs,
 Unmanacled, displayed the truest forms
 Of strength and beauty: fearless, sure, they were,
 And, while they eyed us, grasped their spears, as if,
 Like Britain's injured but unconquered sons,
 They, too, had known how perilous it was
 To see an armed stranger set his foot
 In their free country.

Soon the courteous guise
 Of men, nor purporting nor fearing ill,
 Won confidence; their wild distrustful looks
 Assumed a milder meaning; over one
 I cast my mantle, on another's head
 The velvet bonnet placed, and all was joy.
 We now besought for food; at once they read

Our gestures ; but I cast a hopeless eye
 On mountains, thickets, woods, and marshy plains,
 A waste of rank luxuriance all around.
 Thus musing, to a lake I followed them,
 Left, when the rivers to their summer course
 Withdrew ; they scattered on its water drugs
 Of such strange potency, that soon the shoals,
 Cooped there by Nature, prodigally kind,
 Floated inebriate. As I gazed, a deer
 Sprung from the bordering thicket ; the true shaft
 Scarce with the distant victim's blood had stained
 Its point, when instantly he dropt and died,
 Such deadly juice imbued it : yet on this
 We made our meal unharmed, and I perceived,
 The wisest leech that ever in our world
 Culled herbs of hidden virtue, was to these
 Even as an infant.

Sorrowing we beheld

The night come on ; but soon did night display
 More wonders than it veiled : innumerable tribes
 From the wood-cover swarmed, and darkness made
 Their beauties visible ; one while, they streamed
 A bright blue radiance upon flowers that closed
 Their gorgeous colours from the eye of day ;
 Now, motionless and dark, eluded search,

Self-shrouded ; and anon, starring the sky,
Rose like a shower of fire.

Our friendly hosts

Now led us to the hut, our that night's home,
A rude and spacious dwelling : twisted boughs,
And canes, and withies, formed the walls and roof ;
And from the unhewn trunks which pillared it,
Low nets of interwoven reeds were hung.
With shouts of honour here they gathered round me,
Ungarmented my limbs, and in a net,
With softest feathers lined, a pleasant couch,
They laid and left me.

To our ships returned,

After soft sojourn here, we coasted on,
Insatiate of the wonders and the charms
Of earth, and air, and sea. Thy summer woods
Are lovely, O my mother isle ! the birch
Light bending on thy banks, thy elmy vales,
Thy venerable oaks ! . . . but there, what forms
Of beauty clothed the inlands and the shore !
All these in stateliest growth, and, mixt with these,
Dark-spreading cedar, and the cypress tall,
Its pointed summit waving to the wind,
Like a long beacon-flame ; and, loveliest
Amid a thousand strange and lovely shapes,

The lofty palm, that with its nuts supplied
 Beverage and food ; they edged the shore, and crowned
 The far-off mountain summits, their straight stems
 Bare, without leaf or bough, erect and smooth,
 Their tresses nodding like a crested helm,
 The plumage of the grove.

Will ye believe

The wonders of the ocean? how its shoals
 Sprung from the wave, like flashing light, .. took wing,
 And, twinkling with a silver glitterance,
 Flew through the air and sunshine? yet were they
 To sight less wondrous than the tribe who swam,
 Following, like fowlers, with uplifted eye,
 Their falling quarry : .. language cannot paint
 Their splendid tints ! though in blue ocean seen,
 Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,
 In all its rich variety of shades,
 Suffused with glowing gold.

Heaven, too, had there

Its wonders : ... from a deep, black, heavy cloud,
 What shall I say? .. a shoot, .. a trunk, .. an arm
 Came down ; .. yea ! like a demon's arm, it seized
 The waters : Ocean smoked beneath its touch,
 And rose, like dust before the whirlwind's force.

But we sailed onward over tranquil seas,
Wafted by airs so exquisitely mild,
That even the very breath became an act
Of will, and sense, and pleasure ! Not a cloud
With purple islanded the dark-blue deep.
By night, the quiet billows heaved and glanced
Under the moon, . . . that heavenly moon ! so bright,
That many a midnight have I paced the deck,
Forgetful of the hours of due repose ;
By day, the Sun, in his full majesty,
Went forth like God beholding his own works.

Once, when a chief was feasting us on shore,
A captive served the food : I marked the youth,
For he had features of a gentler race ;
And oftentimes his eye was fixed on me,
With looks of more than wonder. We returned,
At evening, to our ships ; at night, a voice
Came from the sea, the intelligible voice
Of earnest supplication : he had swam
To trust our mercy ; up the side he sprung,
And looked among the crew, and, singling me,
Fell at my feet. Such friendly tokenings
As our short commerce with the native tribes
Had taught, I proffered, and sincerity

Gave force and meaning to the half-learnt forms ;
For one we needed, who might speak for us,
And well I liked the youth, the open lines
That charactered his face, the fearless heart,
That gave at once, and won full confidence.
So that night at my feet Lincoya slept.

When I displayed whate'er might gratify,
Whate'er surprise, with most delight he viewed
Our arms, the iron helm, the pliant mail,
The buckler, strong to save; and then he shoók
The lance, and grasped the sword, and turned to me
With vehement words and gestures, every limb
Working with one strong passion ; and he placed
The falchion in my hand, and gave the shield,
And pointed south and west, that I should go,
To conquer and protect ; anon, he wept
Aloud, and clasped my knees, and, falling, fain
He would have kissed my feet. Went we to shore?
Then would he labour restlessly, to show
A better place lay onward ; and in the sand,
To south and west, he drew the line of coast,
And figured how a mighty river there
Ran to the sea. The land bent westward soon,
And thus confirmed, we voyaged on to seek

The river inlet, following at the will
 Of our new friend : and we learnt after him,
 Well pleased, and proud to teach, what this was called,
 What that, with no unprofitable toil.
 Nor light the joy I felt at hearing first
 The pleasant accents of my native tongue,
 Albeit in broken words, and tones uncouth,
 Come from these foreign lips.

At length we came

Where the great river, amid shoals, and banks,
 And islands, growth of its own gathering spoils,
 Through many a branching channel, wide and full,
 Rushed to the main. The gale was strong ; and safe,
 Amid the uproar of conflicting tides,
 Our gallant vessels rode. A stream as broad,
 As turbid, when it leaves the Land of Hills,
 Old Severn rolls ; but banks so fair as these
 Old Severn views not in his Land of Hills,
 Nor even where his turbid waters swell,
 And sully the salt sea.

So we sailed on

By shores, now covered with impervious woods,
 Now stretching wide and low, a reedy waste,
 And now through vales where earth profusely poured

Her treasures, gathered from the first of days.
 Sometimes a savage tribe would welcome us,
 By wonder from their lethargy of life
 Awakened ; then again we voyaged on
 Through tracts all desolate, for days and days,
 League after league, one green and fertile mead,
 That fed a thousand herds.

A different scene

Rose on our view, of mount on mountain piled,
 Which when I see again in memory,
 The giant Cader Idris by their bulk
 Is dwarfed, and Snowdon, with its eagle haunts,
 Shrinks, and seems dwindled like a Saxon hill.

Here, with Cadwallon and a chosen band,
 I left the ships. Lincoya guided us
 A toilsome way among the heights ; at dusk
 We reached the village skirts ; he bade us halt,
 And raised his voice ; the elders of the land
 Came forth, and led us to an ample hut,
 That in the centre of their dwellings stood, . .
 The Stranger's House. They eyed us wondering,
 Yet not for wonder ceased they to observe
 Their hospitable rites ; from hut to hut

They spread the tale that strangers were arrived,
Fatigued, and hungry, and athirst; anon,
Each from his means supplying us, came food
And beverage, such as cheers the weary man.

VI.

At morning, their high priest, Ayayaca,
Came with our guide: the venerable man
With reverential awe accosted us,
For we, he weened, were children of a race
Mightier than they, and wiser, and by heaven
Beloved and favoured more: he came to give
Fit welcome, and he led us to the Queen.
The fate of war had reft her of her realm;
Yet with affection and habitual awe,
And old remembrances, which gave their love
A deeper and religious character,
Fallen as she was, and humbled as they were,
Her faithful people still, in all they could,
Obeyed Erillyah. She, too, in her mind
Those recollections cherished, and such thoughts
As, though no hope tempered their bitterness,
Gave to her eye a spirit, and a strength

VI. 55

And pride to features, which perchance had borne,
Had they been fashioned to a happier fate,
Meaning more gentle and more womanly,
Yet not more worthy of esteem and love.
She sate upon the threshold of her hut ;
For in the palace where her sires had reigned
The conqueror dwelt. Her son was at her side,
A boy now near to manhood ; by the door,
Bare of its bark, the head and branches shorn,
Stood a young tree, with many a weapon hung,
Her husband's war-pole, and his monument.
There had his quiver mouldered, his stone-axe
Had there grown green with moss, his bow-string there
Sung as it cut the wind.

She welcomed us
With a proud sorrow in her mien ; fresh fruits
Were spread before us, and her gestures said
That when he lived, whose hand was wont to wield
Those weapons, . . . that in better days, . . . that ere
She let the tresses of her widowhood
Grow wild, she could have given to guests like us,
A worthier welcome Soon a man approached,
Hooded with sable, his half-naked limbs
Smeared black ; the people, at his sight, drew round,
The women wailed and wept, the children turned,
And hid their faces on their mothers knees.

He to the Queen addrest his speech, then looked
 Around the children, and laid hands on two,
 Of different sexes, but of age alike,
 Some six years each : they at his touch shrieked out ;
 But then Lincoya rose, and to my feet
 Led them, and told me that the conquerors claimed
 These innocents, for tribute ; that the Priest
 Would lay them on the altar of his god,
 Tear out their little hearts in sacrifice,
 Yea, with more cursed wickedness, himself
 Feast on their flesh ! .. I shuddered, and my hand
 Instinctively unsheathed the holy sword.
 He, with most passionate and eloquent signs,
 Eye-speaking earnestness, and quivering lips,
 Besought me to preserve himself, and those
 Who now fell suppliant round me, .. youths and maids,
 Grey-headed men, and mothers with their babes.

I caught the little victims up, I kissed
 Their innocent cheeks, I raised my eyes to heaven,
 I called upon Almighty God, to hear
 And bless the vow I made : in our own tongue
 Was that sworn promise of protection vowed, ..
 Impetuous feeling made no pause for thought.
 Heaven heard the vow ; the suppliant multitude
 Saw what was stirring in my breast ; the Priest,

VI. 57

With eye inflamed, and rapid answer, raised
His menacing hand ; the tone, the bitter smile,
Interpreting his threat.

Meanwhile the Queen,
With watchful eye and steady countenance,
Had listened ; now she rose, and to the Priest
Addressed her speech. Low was her voice and calm,
As one who spake with effort to subdue
Sorrow that struggled still ; but as she spake,
Her features kindled to more majesty,
Her eye became more animate, her voice
Rose to the height of feeling ; on her son
She called, and from her husband's monument
His battle-axe she took ; and I could see,
That as she gave the boy his father's arms,
She called his father's spirit to look on,
And bless them to his vengeance.

Silently
The tribe stood listening as Erillyab spake ;
The very priest was awed : once he essayed
To answer ; his tongue failed him, and his lip
Grew pale, and fell. He to his countrymen,
Of rage and shame and wonder full, returned,
Bearing no victims for their shrines accurst,
But tidings that the Hoamen had cast off

VI. 58

Their vassalage, roused to desperate revolt
By men, in hue and speech and garment strange,
Who, in their folly, dared defy the power
Of Aztlan.

When the king of Aztlan heard
The unlooked-for tale, ere yet he roused his strength,
Or pitying our rash valour, or belike
Curious to see the man so bravely rash,
He sent to bid me to his court. Surprised,
I should have given to him no credulous faith,
But fearlessly Erillyab bade me trust
Her honourable foe. Unarmed I went,
Lincoya with me, to exchange our speech,
So as he could, of safety first assured ;
For to their damned idols he had been
A victim doomed, and from the bloody rites,
Flying, been carried captive far away.

From early morning, till the midnight hour,
We travelled in the mountains ; then a plain
Opened below, and rose upon the sight,
Like boundless ocean from a hill-top seen.
A beautiful and populous plain it was ;
Fair woods were there, and fertilizing streams,
And pastures spreading wide, and villages

VI. 59

In fruitful groves embowered, and stately towns,
And many a single dwelling specking it,
As though, for many a year, the land had been
The land of peace. Below us, where the base
Of the great mountains to the level sloped,
A broad blue lake extended far and wide
Its waters, dark beneath the light of noon.
There Aztlan stood upon the farther shore ;
Amid the shade of trees its dwellings rose,
Their level roofs with turrets set around,
And battlements all burnished white, that shone
Like silver in the sun-shine. I beheld
The imperial city, her far-circling walls,
Her garden groves, and stately palaces,
Her temples mountain size, her thousand roofs ;
And when I saw her might and majesty,
My mind misgave me then.

We reached the shore :

A floating islet waited for me there,
The beautiful work of man. I set my foot
Upon green-growing herbs and flowers, and sate
Embowered in odorous shrubs : four long light boats
Yoked to the garden, with accordant song,
And dip and dash of oar in harmony,
Bore me across the lake.

VI. 60

Then in a car

Aloft by human bearers was I borne.

And through the city-gate, and through long lines

Of marshalled multitudes, who thronged the way,

We reached the palace court. Four priests were there ;

Each held a burning censer in his hand,

And strewed the precious gum as I drew nigh,

And held the steaming fragrance forth to me,

As I had been a god. They led me in,

Where, on his throne, the royal Azteca

Coanocotzin sate. Stranger, said he,

Welcome ! and be this coming to thy weal !

A desperate warfare doth thy courage court ;

But thou shalt see the people, and the power

Whom thy deluded zeal would call to arms ;

So may the knowledge make thee timely wise.

The valiant love the valiant. Come with me !

So saying, he rose ; we went together forth

To the Great Temple. 'Twas a huge square hill,

Or, rather, like a rock it seemed, hewn out

And squared by patient labour. Never yet

Did our forefathers, o'er beloved chief

Fallen in his glory, heap a monument

Of that prodigious bulk, though every shield

Was laden for his grave, and every hand

VI. 61

Toiled unremitting, at the willing work,
From morn till eve, all the long summer-day.

The ascent was lengthened with provoking art,
By steps that led but to a wearying path
Round the whole structure; then another flight,
Another road around, and thus a third,
And yet a fourth, before we reached the height.
Lo now, Coanocotzin cried, thou seest
The cities of this widely-peopled plain;
And, wert thou on yon farthest temple-top,
Yet as far onward wouldst thou see the land
Well husbanded, like this, and full of men.
They tell me that two floating Palaces
Brought thee and all thy people; .. when I sound
The Tambour of the God, ten Cities hear
Its voice, and answer to the call, in arms.

In truth I felt my weakness, and the view
Had wakened no unreasonable fear,
But that a nearer sight had stirred my blood;
For on the summit where we stood, four Towers
Were piled with human skulls, and all around
Long files of human heads were strung, to parch
And whiten in the sun. What then I felt

VI. 62

Was more than natural courage, .. 'twas a trust
In more than mortal strength, .. a faith in God, ..
Yea, inspiration from him ! I exclaimed,
Not though ten Cities ten times told obeyed
The king of Aztlan's bidding, should I fear
The power of man !

Art thou, then, more than man ?

He answered ; and I saw his tawny cheek
Lose its life-colour, as the fear arose ;
Nor did I undeceive him from that fear,
For, sooth, I knew not how to answer him,
And therefore let it work. So not a word
Spake he, till we again had reached the court ;
And I, too, went in silent thoughtfulness :
But then when, save Lincoya, there was none,
To hear our speech, again did he renew
The query, .. Stranger ! art thou more than man,
That thou shouldst set the power of man at nought ?

Then I replied, Two floating Palaces
Bore me, and all my people, o'er the seas.
When we departed from our mother-land,
The Moon was newly born ; we saw her wax
And wane, and witnessed her new birth again ;
And all that while, alike by day and night,

VI. 63

We travelled through the sea, and caught the winds,
And made them bear us forward. We must meet
In battle, if the Hoamen are not freed
From your accursed tribute, . . . thou and I,
My people, and thy countless multitudes.
Your arrows shall fall from us, as the hail
Leaps on a rock, . . . and when ye smite with swords,
Not blood, but fire, shall follow from the stroke.
Yet think not thou that we are more than men !
Our knowledge is our power, and God our strength,
God, whose almighty will created thee,
And me, and all that hath the breath of life.
He is our strength ; . . . for in his name I speak, . . .
And when I tell thee that thou shalt not shed
The life of man in bloody sacrifice,
It is his holy bidding that I speak :
And if thou wilt not listen and obey,
When I shall meet thee in the battle field,
It is his holy cause for which I fight,
And I shall have his power to conquer thee !

And thinkest thou our Gods are feeble ? cried
The king of Aztlan ; dost thou deem they lack
Power to defend their altars, and to keep
The kingdom that they gave us strength to win ?

VI. 64

The Gods of thirty nations have opposed
 Their irresistible might, and they lie now
 Conquered and caged and fettered at their feet.
 That they who serve them are no coward race,
 Let prove the ample realm they won in arms : . . .
 And I, their leader, am not of the sons
 Of the feeble ! As he spake, he reached a mace,
 The trunk and knotted root of some young tree,
 Such as old Albion, and his monster-brood,
 From the oak-forest for their weapons plucked,
 When father Brute and Corineus set foot
 On the White Island first. Lo this, quoth he,
 My club ! and he threw back his robe ; and this
 The arm that wields it ! . . . 'twas my father's once :
 Erillyab's husband, King Tepollomi,
 He felt its weight . . . did I not show thee him ?
 He lights me at my evening banquet. There,
 In very deed, the dead Tepollomi
 Stood up against the wall, by devilish art
 Preserved ; and from his black and shrivelled hand
 The steady lamp hung down.

My spirit rose

At that abomination ; I exclaimed,
 Thou art of noble nature, and full fain
 Would I in friendship plight my hand with thine ;

VI. 65

But till that body in the grave be laid,
Till thy polluted altars be made pure,
There is no peace between us. May my God,
Who, though thou knowest him not, is also thine,
And, after death, will be thy dreadful Judge,
May it please him to visit thee, and shed
His mercy on thy soul! . . . But if thy heart
Be hardened to the proof, come when thou wilt!
I know thy power, and thou shalt then know mine.

VII.

Now then to meet the war ! Erillyab's call
Roused all her people to revenge their wrongs ;
And, at Lincoya's voice, the mountain tribes
Arose and broke their bondage. I, meantime,
Took council with Cadwallon and his sire,
And told them of the numbers we must meet,
And what advantage from the mountain straits
I thought, as in the Saxon wars, to win.
Thou sawest their weapons, then Cadwallon said ;
Are they like these rude works of ignorance,
Bone-headed shafts, and spears of wood, and shields
Strong only for such strife ?

We had to cope
With wiser enemies, and abler armed.
What for the sword they wielded was a staff
Set thick with stones across ; you would have judged
That-uncouth shape was cumbrous ; but a hand
Expert, and practised to its use, could drive

VII. 67

The heavy edge with deadly impulse down.
Their mail, if mail it may be called, was woven
Of vegetable down, like finest flax,
Bleached to the whiteness of the new-fallen snow,
To every bend and motion flexible,
Light as a warrior's summer-garb in peace ;
Yet, in that lightest, softest, habergeon,
Harmless the sharp stone-arrow-head would hang.
Others, of higher office, were arrayed
In feathery breast-plates, of more gorgeous hue
Than the gay plumage of the mountain-cock,
Than the pheasant's glittering pride. But what were these,
Or what the thin gold hauberk, when opposed
To arms like ours in battle? What the mail
Of wood fire-hardened, or the wooden helm,
Against the iron arrows of the South,
Against our northern spears, or battle-axe,
Or good sword, wielded by a British hand?

Then, quoth Cadwallon, at the wooden helm;
Of these weak arms the weakest, let the sword
Hew, and the spear be thrust : the mountaineers,
So long inured to crouch beneath their yoke,
We will not trust in battle ; from the heights,
They, with their arrows, may annoy the foe ;

VII. 68

And, when our closer strife has won the fray,
Then let them loose for havoc.

O my son!

Exclaimed the blind old man, thou counsellest ill!
Blood will have blood, revenge beget revenge,
Evil must come of evil! We shall win,
Certes, a cheap and easy victory
In the first field; their arrows from our arms
Will fall, and on the hauberk and the helm
The stone-edge blunt and break; while thro' their limbs,
Naked, or vainly fenced, the griding steel
Shall sheer its mortal way. But what are we
Against a nation? Other hosts will rise
In endless warfare, with perpetual fights
Dwindling our all-too-few; or multitudes
Will wear and weary us, till we sink subdued
By the very toil of conquest. Ye are brave;
But he who puts his trust in mortal strength,
Leans on a broken reed! First prove your power;
Be in the battle terrible, but spare
The fallen, and follow not the flying foe;
Then may ye win a nobler victory,
So dealing with the captives as to fill
Their hearts with wonder, gratitude, and awe,
That love shall mingle with their fear, and fear

VII. 69

Stablish the love, else wavering : let them see,
That as more pure and gentle is your faith,
Yourselves are gentler, purer. Ye shall be
As gods among them, if ye thus obey
God's precepts.

Soon the mountain-tribes, in arms,
Rose at Lincoya's call ; a numerous host,
More than in numbers, in the memory
Of long oppression, and revengeful hope,
A formidable foe. I stationed them
Where, at the entrance of the rocky straits,
Secure themselves, their arrows might command
The coming army. On the plain below
We took our stand, between the mountain base
And the green margin of the waters. Soon
Their long array came on. Oh what a pomp
And pride and pageantry of war was there !
Not half so gorgeous, for their May-day mirth
All wreathed and ribbanded, our youths and maids,
As these stern Aztecas in war attire !
The golden glitterance, and the feather-mail,
More gay than glittering gold ; and round the helm,
A coronal of high upstanding plumes,
Green as the spring grass in a sunny shower ;
Or scarlet-bright, as in the wintry wood

VII. 70

The clustered holly ; or of purple tint, . .
Whereto shall that be likened ? to what gem
Indiademed, . . what flower, . . what insects's wing ?
With war-songs and wild music they came on,
We, the while, kneeling, raised with one accord
The hymn of supplication.

Front to front

And now the embattled armies stood : a band
Of priests, all sable-garmented, advanced ;
They piled a heap of sedge before our host,
And warned us, . . Sons of Ocean ! from the land
Of Aztlan, while ye may, depart in peace !
Before the fire shall be extinguished, hence !
Or, even as yon dry sedge amid the flame,
So ye shall be consumed ! . . . The arid heap
They kindled, and the rapid flame ran up,
And blazed, and died away. Then from his bow,
With steady hand, their chosen archer loosed,
The Arrow of the Omen. To its mark
The shaft of divination fled ; it smote
Cadwallon's plated breast ; the brittle point
Rebounded. He, contemptuous of their faith,
Stooped for the shaft, and while with zealous speed
To the rescue they rushed onward, snapping it
Asunder, cast the fragments back in scorn.

VII. 71

Fierce was their onset ; never in the field
Encountered I with braver enemies.
Nor marvel ye, nor think it to their shame,
If soon they staggered, and gave way, and fled,
So many from so few ; they saw their darts
Recoil, their lances shiver, and their swords
Fall ineffectual, blunted with the blow.
Think ye no shame of Aztlan that they fled,
When the bowmen of Deheubarth plied so well
Their shafts, with fatal aim ; through the thin gold,
Or feather-mail, while Gwyneth's deep-driven spears
Pierced to the bone and vitals ; when they saw
The falchion, flashing late so lightning like,
Quenched in their own life-blood. Our mountaineers
Showered from the heights, meantime, an arrowy storm,
Themselves secure ; and we who bore the brunt
Of battle, iron men, impassible,
Stood in our strength unbroken. Marvel not
If then the brave felt fear, already impressed
That day by ominous thoughts, to fear akin ;
For it so chanced, high heaven ordaining so,
The king, who should have led his people forth,
At the army head, as they began their march,
Was with sore sickness stricken ; and the stroke
Came like the act and arm of very God,

So suddenly, and in that point of time.
A gallant man was he, who, in his stead,
That day commanded Aztlan ; his long hair,
Tufted with many a cotton lock, proclaimed
Of princely prowess many a feat atchieved,
In many a field of fame. Oft had he led
The Aztecas, with happy fortune, forth ;
Yet could not now Yuhidthiton inspire
His host with hope : he, not the less, that day,
True to his old renown, and in the hour
Of rout and ruin, with collected mind,
Sounded his signals shrill, and in the voice
Of loud reproach, and anger, and brave shame,
Called on the people. . . But when nought availed,
Seizing the standard from the timid hand
Which held it in dismay, alone he turned,
For honourable death resolved, and praise
That would not die. At that the braver chiefs
Rallied, anew their signals rung around,
And Aztlan, seeing how we spared her flight,
Took heart, and rolled the tide of battle back.
But when Cadwallon from the chieftain's grasp
Had cut the standard-staff away, and stunned
And stretched him at his mercy on the field ;
Then fled the enemy in utter rout,

VII. 73

Broken, and quelled at heart. One chief alone
Bestrode the body of Yuhidthiton;
Bareheaded did young Malinal bestride
His brother's body, wiping from his brow
With the shield-hand the blinding blood away,
And dealing frantically, with broken sword,
Obstinate wrath, the last resisting foe.
Him, in his own despite, we seized and saved.
Then, in the moment of our victory,
We purified our hands from blood, and knelt,
And poured to heaven the grateful prayer of praise,
And raised the choral psalm. Triumphant thus
To the hills we went our way; the mountaineers
With joy, and dissonant song, and antic dance;
The captives sullenly, deeming that they went
To meet the certain death of sacrifice,
Yet stern and undismayed. We bade them know,
Ours was a law of mercy and of love;
We healed their wounds, and set the prisoners free.
Bear ye, quoth I, my bidding to your King!
Say to him, Did the Stranger speak to thee
The words of truth, and hath he proved his power?
Thus saith the Lord of Ocean, in the name
Of God, Almighty, Universal God,
Thy Judge and mine, whose battles I have fought,

VII. 74

Whose bidding I obey, whose will I speak ;
Shed thou no more, in impious sacrifice,
The life of man ; restore unto the grave
The dead Tepollomi ; set this people free,
And peace shall be between us.

On the morrow

Came messengers from Aztlan, in reply.
Coanocotzin with sore malady
Hath, by the Gods, been stricken. Will the Lord
Of Ocean visit his sick-bed? . . he told
Of wrath, and as he said, the vengeance came :
Let him bring healing now, and stablish peace.

VIII

Again, and now with better hope, I sought
The city of the King : there went with me
Iolo, old Iolo, he who knows
The virtue of all herbs of mount or vale,
Or greenwood shade, or quiet brooklet's bed ;
Whatever lore of science, or of song,
Sages and Bards of old have handed down.
Aztlán that day poured forth her swarming sons,
To wait my coming. Will he ask his God
To stay the wrathful hand? that was the cry,
The general cry, And will he save the King?
Coanocotzin too had nursed that thought,
And the strong hope upheld him: he put forth
His hand, and raised a quick and anxious eye, . .
Is it not peace and mercy? . . thou art come
To pardon and to save!

I answered him,

VIII. 76

That power, O King of Aztlan, is not mine.
Such help as human cunning can bestow,
Such human help I bring ; but health and life
Are in the hand of God, who at his will
Gives or withdraws ; and what he wills is best.
Then old Iolo took his arm, and felt
The symptom, and he bade him have good hope,
For life was strong within him. So it proved ;
The drugs of subtle virtue did their work ;
They quelled the venom of the malady,
And from the frame expelled it, . . . that a sleep
Fell on the king, a sweet and natural sleep,
And from its healing he awoke refreshed,
Though weak, and joyful like a man who felt
The peril past away.

Ere long we spake
Of concord, and how best to knit the bonds
Of lasting friendship. When we won this land,
Coanocotzin said, these fertile vales
Were not, as now, with fruitful groves embowered,
Nor rich with towns and populous villages,
Abounding, as thou seest, with life and joy :
Our fathers found bleak heath, and desert moor,
Wild woodland, and savannahs wide and waste,
Rude country of rude dwellers : from our arms

VIII. 77

They to the mountain fastnesses retired,
And long with obstinate and harrassing war
Provoked us, hoping not for victory,
Yet mad for vengeance: till Tepollomi
Fell by my father's hand; and with their king,
The strength and flower of all their youth cut off,
All in one desolating day, they took
The yoke upon their necks. What wouldest thou
That to these Hoamen I should now concede?
Lord of the Ocean, speak!

Let them be free!

Quoth I. I come not from my native isle
To wage the war of conquest, to cast out
Your people from the land which time and toil
Have rightly made their own. The World is wide:
There is enough for all. So they be freed
From that accursed tribute, and ye shed
The life of man no more in sacrifice, . .
In the most holy name of God I say,
Let there be peace between us!

Thou hast won

Their liberty, the King replied: henceforth,
Free as they are, if they provoke the war,
Reluctantly will Aztlan raise her arm.
Be thou the peace-preserver. To what else

VIII. 78

Thou sayest, instructed by calamity,
 I lend a humble ear; but to destroy
 The worship of my fathers, or abate
 Or change one point, lies not within the reach
 And scope of kingly power. Speak thou hereon
 With those whom we hold holy, with the sons
 Of the Temple, they who commune with the Gods;
 Awe them, for they awe me. So we resolved,
 That when the bones of King Tepollomi
 Had had their funeral honours, they and I
 Should, by the green lake-side, before the King,
 And in the presence of the people, hold
 A solemn talk.

Then to the mountain huts,
 The bearer of good tidings, I returned,
 Leading the honourable train who bore
 The relics of the King; not parched and black,
 As I had seen the unnatural corpse stand up,
 In ghastly mockery of the attitude
 And act of life; . . . his bones had now been blanched
 With decent reverence. Soon the mountaineers
 Saw the white deer-skin shroud; the rumour spread;
 They gathered round, and followed in our train.
 Before Erillyab's hut the bearers laid
 Their burthen down. She, calm of countenance,

VIII. 79

And with dry eye, albeit her hand, the while,
Shook like an agueish limb, unrolled the shroud.
The multitude stood gazing silently,
The young and old alike, all awed and hushed
Under the holy feeling, . . . and the hush
Was awful ; that huge multitude so still,
That we could hear distinct the mountain stream
Roll down its rocky channel far away.
And this was all ; sole ceremony this,
The sight of death and silence, . . . till at length,
In the ready grave the bones were laid to rest.
'Twas in her hut and home, yea, underneath
The marriage bed, the bed of widowhood,
Her husband's grave was dug ; on softest fur
The bones were laid, with fur were covered o'er,
Then heapt with bark and boughs, and, last of all,
Earth was to earth trod down.

And now the day

Appointed for our talk of peace was come.
On the green margin of the lake we met,
Elders, and Priests, and Chiefs ; the multitude
Around the circle of the council stood.
Then, in the midst, Coanocotzin rose,
And thus the King began : Pabas, and Chiefs
Of Aztlan, hither ye are come to learn

VIII. 80

The law of peace. The Lord of Ocean saith,
The Tribes whom he hath gathered underneath
The wings of his protection, shall be free ;
And, in the name of his great God, he saith,
That ye shall never shed in sacrifice
The blood of man. Are ye content? that so
We may together here, in happy hour,
Bury the sword!

Hereat a Paba rose,
And answered for his brethren : .. He hath won
The Hoamen's freedom, that their blood no more
Shall on our altars flow ; for this the Lord
Of Ocean fought, and Aztlan yielded it
In battle : but if we forego the rites
Of our forefathers, if we wrong the Gods,
Who give us timely sun and timely showers,
Their wrath will be upon us ; they will shut
Their ears to prayer, and turn away the eyes
That watch for our well-doing, and with-hold
The hands that scatter our prosperity.

Cynetha then arose ; between his son
And me supported, rose the blind old man.
Ye wrong us, men of Aztlan, if ye deem
We bid ye wrong the Gods ; accurst were he

Who would obey such bidding, . . . more accurst
 The wretch who should enjoin impiety !
 It is the will of God which we make known,
 Your God and ours. Know ye not Him, who laid
 The deep foundations of the earth, and built
 The arch of heaven, and kindled yonder sun,
 And breathed into the woods and waves and sky
 The power of life ?

We know Him ! they replied,
 The great For-Ever One, the God of Gods,
 Ipalmemoani, He by whom we live !
 And we too, quoth Ayayaca, we know
 And worship the Great Spirit, who in clouds
 And storms, in mountain caves, and by the fall
 Of waters, in the woodland solitude,
 And in the night and silence of the sky,
 Doth make his being felt. We also know,
 And fear, and worship the Beloved One.

Our God, replied Cynetha, is the same,
 The Universal Father. He to the first
 Made his will known ; but when men multiplied,
 The Evil Spirits darkened them, and sin
 And misery came into the world, and men
 Forsook the way of truth, and gave to stocks :

And stoncs the incommunicable name.
 Yet with one chosen, one peculiar Race,
 The knowledge of their Father and their God
 Remained, from sire to son transmitted down.
 While the bewildered Nations of the earth
 Wandered in fogs, and were in darkness lost,
 The light abode with them ; and when at times
 They sinned and went astray, the Lord hath put
 A voice into the mouths of holy men,
 Raising up witnesses unto himself,
 That so the saving knowledge of his name
 Might never fail ; nor the glad promise, given
 To our first parent, that at length his sons,
 From error, sin, and wretchedness redeemed,
 Should form one happy family of love.
 Nor ever hath that light, how'er bedimmed,
 Wholly been quenched : still in the heart of man,
 A feeling and an instinct it exists,
 His very nature's stamp and privilege,
 Yea, of his life the life. I tell ye not,
 O Aztecas ! of things unknown before ;
 I do but waken up that living sense
 That sleeps within ye ! Do ye love the Gods
 Who call for blood ? Doth the poor sacrifice
 Go with a willing step, to lay his life

VIII. 89

Upon their altars? . . . Good must come of good,
Evil of evil; if the fruit be death,
The poison springeth from the sap and root,
And the whole tree is deadly; if the rites
Be evil, they who claim them are not good,
Not to be worshipped then; for to obey
The evil will is evil. Aztecas!
From the For-Ever, the Beloved One,
The Universal Only God I speak,
Your God and mine, our Father and our Judge.
Hear ye his law, . . . hear ye the perfect law
Of love, "Do ye to others, as ye would
That they should do to you!" He bids us meet
To praise his name, in thankfulness and joy;
He bids us, in our sorrow, pray to him,
The Comforter; love him, for he is good!
Fear him, for he is just! obey his will,
For who can bear his anger!

While he spake,
They stood with open mouth, and motionless sight,
Watching his countenance, as though the voice
Were of a God; for sure it seemed that less
Than inspiration could not have infused
That eloquent passion in a blind man's face.
And when he ceased, all eyes at once were turned

VIII. 84

Upon the Pabas, waiting their reply,
If that to that acknowledged argument
Reply could be devised; but they themselves,
Stricken by the truth, were silent; and they looked
Toward their chief and mouth-piece, the High Priest
Tezozomoc; he too was pale and mute,
And when he gathered up his strength to speak,
Speech failed him, his lip faltered, and his eye
Fell, utterly abashed, and put to shame.
But in the Chiefs, and in the multitude,
And in the King of Aztlan, better thoughts
Were working; for the Spirit of the Lord
That day was moving in the heart of man.
Coanocotzin rose: Pabas, and Chiefs,
And men of Aztlan, ye have heard a talk
Of peace and love, and there's no reply.
Are ye content with what the Wise Man saith?
And will ye worship God in that good way
Which God himself ordains? If it be so,
We will together here, in happy hour,
Bury the sword.

Tezozomoc replied,
This thing is new, and in the land till now
Unheard: . . . what marvel, therefore, if we find
No ready answer? Let our Lord the King
Do that which seemeth best.

Yuhidthiton,

Chief of the Chiefs of Aztlan, next arose.
 Of all her numerous sons, could Aztlan boast
 No mightier arm in battle, nor whose voice
 To more attentive silence hushed the hall
 Of council. When the Wise Man spake, quoth he,
 I asked of mine own heart if it were so,
 And, as he said, the living instinct there
 Answered, and owned the truth. In happy hour,
 O King of Aztlan, did the Ocean Lord
 Through the great waters hither wend his way;
 For sure he is the friend of God and man!

At that an uproar of assent arose
 From the whole people, a tumultuous shout
 Of universal joy and glad acclaim.
 But when Coanocotzin raised his hand,
 That he might speak, the clamour and the buzz
 Ceased, and the multitude, in tiptoe hope,
 Attent and still, await the final voice.
 Then said the Sovereign, Hear, O Aztecas,
 Your own united will! From this day forth
 No life upon the altar shall be shed,
 No blood shall flow in sacrifice; the rites
 Shall all be pure, such as the blind old man,

VIII. 86

Whom God hath taught, will teach. This ye have willed ;
And therefore it shall be!

The King hath said!

Like thunder the collected voice replied :

Let it be so!

Lord of the Ocean, then
Pursued the King of Aztlan, we will now
Lay the war-weapon in the grave, and join
In right-hand friendship. By our custom, blood
Should sanctify and bind the solemn act ;
But by what oath and ceremony thou
Shalt proffer, by the same will Aztlan swear.

Nor oath, nor ceremony, I replied,
O King, is needful. To his own good word
The good and honourable man will act.
Oaths will not curb the wicked. Here we stand
In the broad day-light; the For-Ever One,
The Every-Where beholds us. He will hear
The word, and mark the action : in his sight
We join our hands in peace : if e'er again
Should these right hands be raised in enmity,
Upon the offender will His judgment fall.
The grave was dug; Coanocotzin laid
His weapon in the earth; Erillyab's son,

VIII. 87

Young Amalaha, for the Hoamen, laid
His hatchet there; and there I laid the sword.

Here let me end. What followed was the work
Of peace, no theme of story; how we fixed
Our sojourn in the hills, and sowed our fields,
And, day by day, saw all things prospering.
Thence have I sailed, Goervyl, to announce
The tidings of my happy enterprise;
There I return, to take thee to our home.
I love my native land; with as true love
As ever yet did warm a British heart,
Love I the green fields of the beautiful Isle,
My father's heritage! but far away,
Where Nature's booner hand has blest the earth,
My heritage hath fallen; beyond the seas
Madoc hath found his home; beyond the seas
A country for his children hath he chosen,
A land wherein their portion may be peace.

IX.

But while Aberfraw echoed to the sounds
Of merriment and music, Madoc's heart
Mourned for his brethren. Therefore, when no ear
Was nigh, he sought the King, and said to him,
To-morrow, I set forth for Mathraval;
For long I must not linger here, to pass
The easy hours in feast and revelry,
Forgetful of my people far away.
I go to tell the tidings of success,
And seek new comrades. What if it should chance
That, for this enterprise, our brethren,
Foregoing all their hopes and fortunes here,
Would join my banner? . . . Let me send abroad
That summons, O my brother! so secure,
You may forgive the past, and once again
Will peace and concord bless our father's house.

Hereafter will be time enow for this,
 The King replied; thy easy nature sees not,
 How, if the traitors for thy banner send
 Their bidding round, in open war against me
 Their own would soon be spread. I charge thee, Madoc,
 Neither to see nor aid these fugitives,
 The shame of Owen's blood.

Sullen he spake,

And turned away; nor farther commune now
 Did Madoc seek, nor had he more endured;
 For bitter thoughts were rising in his heart,
 And anguish, kindling anger. In such mood
 He to his sister's chamber took his way.
 She sate with Emma, with the gentle Queen;
 For Emma had already learnt to love
 The gentle maid. Goervyl saw what thoughts
 Troubled her brother's brow. Madoc, she cried,
 Thou hast been with the king, been rashly pleading
 For Ririd and for Rodri!.. He replied,
 I did but ask him little, .. did but say,
 Belike our brethren would go forth with me,
 To voluntary exile; then, methought,
 His fear and jealousy might well have ceased,
 And all be safe.

And did the King refuse?

Quoth Emma. I will plead for them, quoth she,
 With dutiful warmth and zeal will plead for them;
 And surely David will not say me nay.

O sister! cried Goervyl, tempt him not!
 Sister, you know him not! alas, to touch
 That perilous theme is, even in Madoc here,
 A perilous folly . . . Sister, tempt him not!
 You do not know the King!

At that, a fear

Fled to the cheek of Emma, and her eye,
 Quickening with wonder, turned toward the Prince,
 As if expecting that his manly mind
 Would mould Goervyl's meaning to a shape
 Less fearful, would interpret and amend
 The words she hoped she did not hear aright.
 Emma was young; she was a sacrifice
 To that sad king-craft, which, in marriage-vows
 Linking two hearts, unknowing each of each,
 Perverts the ordinance of God, and makes
 The holiest tie a mockery and a curse.
 Her eye was patient, and she spoke in tones
 So sweet, and of so pensive gentleness,
 That the heart heard them. Madoc! she exclaimed,
 Why dost thou hate the Saxons? O my brother!

"If I have heard aright, the hour will come
 When the Plantagenet shall wish herself
 Among her nobler, happier countrymen,
 From these unnatural enmities escaped,
 And from the curse which they will call from heaven.

Shame then suffused the Prince's countenance,
 Mindful how, drunk in anger, he had given
 His hatred loose. My sister Queen, quoth he,
 Marvel not you that with my mother's milk
 I sucked that hatred in. Have they not been
 The scourge and the devouring sword of God,
 The curse and pestilence that he hath sent
 To root us from the land? Alas, our crimes
 Have drawn this fearful visitation down!
 Our sun hath long been westering; and the night,
 And darkness, and extinction are at hand.
 We are a fallen people! . . . From ourselves
 The desolation and the ruin come!
 In our own vitals doth the poison work . . .
 The House that is divided in itself,
 How shall it stand? . . . A blessing on you, Lady!
 But in this wretched family the strife
 Is rooted all too deep: it is an old
 And cankered wound, . . . an eating, killing sore,

IX. 92

For which there is no healing!.. If the King
Should ever speak his fear, .. and sure to you
All his most inward thoughts he will make known, ..
Counsel him then to let his brethren share
My enterprise, to send them forth with me
To everlasting exile. .. She hath told you
Too rudely of the King; I know him well;
He hath a stormy nature; and what germs
Of virtue would have budded in his heart,
Cold winds have checked, and blighting seasons nipt,
Yet in his heart they live: .. A blessing on you,
That you may see their blossom and their fruit!

X.

And now went Madoc forth for Mathraval ;
O'er Menai's ebbing tide, up mountain paths,
Beside grey mountain-stream, and lonely lake,
And through old Snowdon's forest solitude,
He held right on his solitary way.
Nor paused he in that rocky vale, where oft
Up the familiar path, with gladder pace,
His steed had hastened to the well-known door, ..
That valley, o'er whose crags, and sprinkled trees,
And winding stream, so oft his eye had loved
To linger, gazing, as the eve grew dim,
From Dolwyddelan's Tower ; .. alas ! therefrom,
As from his brother's monument, he turned
A loathing eye, and through the rocky vale
Sped on. From morn till noon, from noon till eve,
He travelled on his way ; and when at morn
Again the Ocean Chief bestrode his steed,

The heights of Snowdon on his backward glance
 Hung like a cloud in heaven. O'er heath and hill
 And barren height he rode; and darker now,
 In loftier majesty thy mountain seat,
 Star-loving Idris, rose. Nor turned he now
 Beside Kregennan, where his infant feet
 Had trod Ednywain's hall; nor loitered he
 In the green vales of Powys, till he came
 Where Warnway rolls his waters underneath
 The walls of Mathraval, old Mathraval,
 Cyveilioc's princely and paternal seat.

But Madoc rushed not forward now to greet
 The chief he loved, for from the hall was heard
 The voice of harp and song. It was, that day,
 The feast of victory at Mathraval;
 Around the Chieftain's board the warriors sate;
 The sword, and shield, and helmet, on the wall,
 And round the pillars, were in peace hung up;
 And, as the flashes of the central fire
 At fits arose, a dance of wavy light
 Played o'er the reddening steel. The Chiefs, who late
 So well had wielded, in the play of war,
 Those weapons, sate around the board, to quaff
 The beverage of the brave, and hear their fame.

Cyveilioc stood before them, . . in his pride
 Stood up the Poet-Prince of Mathraval;
 His hands were on the harp, his eyes were closed,
 His head, as if in reverence to receive
 The inspiration, bent; anon, he raised
 His glowing countenance, and brighter eye,
 And swept, with passionate hand, the ringing harp.

Fill high the Hirlas Horn! to Gruffydd bear
 Its frothy beverage, . . from his crimson lance
 The invader fled; . . fill high the gold-tipt Horn!
 Heard ye in Maelor the step of war? . .
 The hastening shout? . . the onset? . . Did ye hear
 The clash and clang of arms? . . the battle-din,
 Loud as the roar of Ocean, when the Winds
 At midnight are abroad? . . the yell of wounds? . .
 The rage? . . the agony? . . . give to him the Horn
 Whose spear was broken, and whose buckler pierced
 With many a shaft, yet not the less he fought
 And conquered; . . therefore let Ednyved share
 The generous draught; give him the long blue Horn!
 Pour out again, and fill again the spoil
 Of the wild bull, with silver wrought-of yore;
 Bear ye to Tudyr's hand the golden lip,
 Eagle of battle! for Moreiddig fill

The honourable Hirlas! . . . where are They?
 Where are the noble Brethren? Wolves of war,
 They kept their border well, they did their part,
 Their fame is full, their lot is praise and song . . .
 A mournful song to me, a song of woe! . . .
 Brave Brethren! for their honour brim the cup,
 Which they shall quaff no more.

We drove away

The strangers from our land; profuse of life,
 Our warriors rushed to battle, and the Sun
 Saw, from his noontide fields, their manly strife.
 Pour thou the flowing mead! Cup-bearer, fill
 'The Hirlas! for hadst thou beheld the day
 Of Llidom, thou hadst known how well the Chiefs
 Deserved this honour now. Cyveilioc's shield
 Were they in danger, when the Invader came;
 Be praise and liberty their lot on earth,
 And joy be theirs in Heaven!

Here ceased the song.

Then from the threshold on the rush-strewn floor
 Madoc advanced. Cyveilioc's eye was now
 'To present forms awake, but, even as still
 He felt his harp-chords throb with dying sounds,
 The heat and stir and passion had not yet
 Subsided in his soul. Again he struck

The loud-toned harp. . . . Pour from the silver vase,
 And brim the honourable Horn, and bear
 The draught of joy to Madoc, . . . he who first
 Explored the desert ways of Ocean, first,
 Through the wide waste of sea and sky, held on
 Undaunted, till upon another World,
 The Lord and Conqueror of the Elements,
 He set his foot triumphant! Fill for him
 The Hirlas! fill the honourable Horn!
 This is a happy hour, for Madoc treads
 The hall of Mathraval; by every foe
 Dreaded, by every friend beloved the best,
 Madoc, the Briton Prince, the Ocean Lord,
 Who never for injustice reared his arm.
 Give him the Hirlas Horn, fill, till the draught
 Of joy shall quiver o'er the golden brim!
 In happy hour the hero hath returned!
 In happy hour the friend, the brother, treads
 Cyveilioc's floor!

He sprung to greet his guest;
 The cordial grasp of fellowship was given;
 They gave the seat of honour, and they filled
 For him the Hirlas Horn. . . . So there was joy
 In Mathraval. Cyveilioc and his Chiefs,
 All eagerly, with wonder-waiting eyes,

Look to the Wanderer of the Waters' tale.
 Nor mean the joy which kindled Madoc's brow,
 Whenas he told of daring enterprize
 Crowned with deserved success. Intent they heard
 Of all the blessings of that happier clime ;
 And when the adventurer spake of soon return,
 Each on the other gazed, as if to say,
 Methinks it were a goodly lot to dwell
 In that fair land in peace.

Then said the Prince

Of Powys, Madoc, at an happy time
 Thy feet have sought the house of Mathraual ;
 For on the morrow, in the eye of light,
 Our bards will hold their congress. Seekest thou
 Comrades to share success? proclaim abroad
 Thine invitation there, and it shall spread
 Far as our fathers ancient tongue is known.

The mantling mead went round at Mathraual ; ..
 That was a happy hour ! Of other years
 They talked, of common toils, and fields of war
 When they fought side by side ; of Corwen's day
 Of glory, and of comrades now no more : ..
 Themes of delight, and grief that brought its joy.
 Thus they beguiled the pleasant hours, while night

Wained fast away ; then late they laid them down,
 Each on his bed of rushes, stretched around
 The central fire.

The Sun was newly risen
 When Madoc joined his host, no longer now
 Clad as the conquering chief of Maelor,
 In princely arms, but in his nobler robe,
 The sky-blue mantle of the bard, arrayed.
 So for the place of meeting they set forth ;
 And now they reached Melangell's lonely church.
 Amid a grove of evergreens it stood,
 A garden and a grove, where every grave
 Was decked with flowers, or with unfading plants
 O'ergrown, sad rue, and funeral rosemary.
 Here Madoc paused. The morn is young, quoth he ;
 A little while to old remembrance given
 Will not belate us. . . Many a year hath fled,
 Cyveilioc, since you led me here, and told
 The legend of the Saint. Come! . . be not loath!
 We will not loiter long. . . So soon to mount
 The bark, which will for ever bear me hence,
 I would not willingly pass by one spot
 That thus recalls the thought of other times,
 Without a pilgrim's visit.

Thus he spake,

F 2

And drew Cyveilioc through the church-yard porch,
 To the rude image of Saint Monacel.
 Dost thou remember, Owen, said the Prince,
 When first I was thy guest in early youth,
 That once, as we had wandered here at eve,
 You told, how here a poor and hunted hare
 Ran to the Virgin's feet, and looked to her
 For life? . . I thought, when listening to the tale,
 She had a merciful heart, and that her face
 Must with a saintly gentleness have beamed,
 When beasts could read its virtue. Here we sate,
 Upon the jutting root of this old yeugh . . .
 Dear friend! so pleasant didst thou make those days,
 That in my heart, long as my heart shall beat,
 Minutest recollections still will live,
 Still be the source of joy.

As Madoc spake,

His glancing eye fell on a monument,
 Around whose base the rosemary drooped down,
 As yet not rooted well. Sculptured above,
 A warrior lay; the shield was on his arm;
 Madoc approached, and saw the blazonry.
 A sudden chill ran through him, as he read,
 Here Yorwerth lies . . . it was his brother's grave.

X. 101

Cyveilioc took him by the hand : For this,
Madoc, was I so loath to enter here !
He sought the sanctuary, but close upon him
The murderers followed, and by yonder copse
The stroke of death was given. All I could
Was done ; . . I saw him here consigned to rest,
Daily due masses for his soul are sung,
And duly hath his grave been decked with flowers.

So saying, from the place of death he led
The silent prince. But lately, he pursued,
Llewelyn was my guest, thy favourite boy.
For thy sake and his own, it was my hope
That he would make his home at Mathraval :
He had not needed then a father's love.
But he, I know not on what enterprise,
Was brooding ever ; and these secret thoughts
Led him away. God prosper the brave boy !
It were a happy day for this poor land
If e'er Llewelyn mount his rightful throne.

XI.

The place of meeting was a high hill-top,
Nor bowered with trees, nor broken by the plough,
Remote from human dwellings, and the stir
Of human life, and open to the breath
And to the eye of Heaven. In days of yore,
There had the circling stones been planted; there,
From earliest ages, the primeval lore,
Thro' Bard to Bard, with reverence handed down.
They whom to wonder, or the love of song,
Or reverence of their father's ancient rites
Led thither, stood without the ring of stones.
Cyveilioc entered to the initiate Bards,
Himself, albeit his hands were stained with war,
Initiate; for the Order in the lapse
Of years, and in their nation's long decline,
From the first rigour of their purity
Somewhat had fallen. The Masters of the Song

XI. 103

In azure robes were robed, that one bright hue
To emblem unity, and peace, and truth,
Like Heaven, that o'er a world of wickedness
Spreads its eternal canopy serene.

The bards of Britain there, a noble band,
Within the Stones of Federation stood,
On the green turf, and under the blue sky,
Their heads in reverence bare, and bare of foot.
A deathless brotherhood! Cyveilioc there,
Lord of the Hirlas; Llywarc there was seen,
And old Cynddelw, to whose lofty song,
So many a time amid his father's hall,
Resigning all his soul, had Madoc given
The flow of feeling loose. But Madoc's heart
Was full; old feelings and remembrances,
And thoughts from which was no escape, arose:
He was not there to whose sweet lay, so oft,
With all a brother's fond delight, he loved
To listen, . . . Hoel was not there! . . . the hand
That once so well, amid the triple chords,
Moved in the rapid maze of harmony,
It had no motion now; the lips were dumb
Which knew all tones of passion; and that heart,
That warm, ebullient heart, was cold and still,

Upon its bed of clay. He looked around,
 And there was no familiar countenance,
 None but Cynddelw's face, which he had learnt
 In childhood, and old age had set his mark,
 Making unsightly alteration there.
 Another generation had sprung up,
 And made him feel how fast the days of man
 Flow by, how soon their number is told out.
 He knew not then that Llywarc's lay should give
 His future fame ; his spirit, on the past
 Brooding, beheld, with no forefeeling joy,
 The rising sons of song, who there essayed
 Their eaglet flight. But there among the youth,
 In the green vesture of their earliest rank,
 Or with the aspirants clad in motley garb,
 Young Benvras stood ; and, one whose favoured race
 Heaven with the hereditary power had blest,
 The old Gwalchmai's not degenerate child ;
 And there another Einion ; gifted youths,
 The heirs of immortality on earth,
 Whose after-strains, through many a distant age
 Cambria shall boast, and love the songs that tell
 The fame of Owen's house.

There, in the eye
 Of light, and in the face of day, the rites

Began. Upon the Stone of Covenant
 The sheathed sword was laid; the Master then
 Raised up his voice, and cried, Let them who seek
 The high degree and sacred privilege
 Of Bardic science, and of Cimbric lore,
 Here to the Bards of Britain make their claim!
 Thus having said, the Master bade the youths
 Approach the place of peace, and merit there
 The Bard's most honourable name: At that
 Heirs and transmitters of the ancient light,
 The youths advanced; they heard the Cimbric lore,
 From earliest days preserved; they struck their harps,
 And each in due succession raised the song.

Last of the aspirants, as of greener years,
 Young Caradoc advanced: his lip as yet
 Scarce darkened with its down, his flaxen locks
 Wreathed in contracting ringlets waving low;
 His large blue eyes were bright, and kindled now
 With that same passion that inflamed his cheek;
 Yet in his cheek there was the sickliness
 Which thought and feeling leave, wearing away
 The hue of youth. Inclining on his harp,
 He, while his comrades in probation song
 Approved their claim, stood hearkening, as it seemed,

XI. 106

And yet like unintelligible sounds
He heard the symphony and voice attuned ;
Even in such feeling as, all undefined,
Come with the flow of waters to the soul,
Or with the motions of the moonlight sky.
But when his bidding came, he at the call
Arising from the dreamy mood, advanced,
Threw back his mantle, and began the lay.

Where are the sons of Gavran ? where his tribe,
The faithful ? following their beloved Chief,
They the Green Islands of the Ocean sought.
Nor human tongue hath told, nor human ear,
Since from the silver shores they went their way,
Hath heard their fortunes. In his crystal Ark,
Whither sailed Merlin with his band of Bards,
Old Merlin, master of the mystic lore ?
Belike his crystal Ark, instinct with life,
Obedient to the mighty Master, reached
The Land of the Departed ; there, belike,
They in the clime of immortality,
Themselves immortal, drink the gales of bliss,
Which o'er Flathinnis breathe eternal spring,
Blending whatever odours make the gale
Of evening sweet, whatever melody

XI. 107

Charms the wood-traveller. In their high-roofed halls,
There, with the Chiefs of other days, feel they
The mingled joy pervade them? . . . Or beneath
The mid-sea waters, did that crystal Ark
Down to the secret depths of Ocean plunge
Its fated crew? Dwell they in coral bowers
With Mermaid loves, teaching their paramours
The songs that stir the sea, or make the winds
Hush, and the waves be still? In fields of joy
Have they their home, where central fires maintain
Perpetual summer, where one emerald light
Though the green element for ever flows?

Twice have the sons of Britain left her shores,
As the fledged eaglets quit their native nest ;
Twice over ocean have her fearless sons
For ever sailed away. Again they launch
Their vessels to the deep. . . Who mounts the bark?
The Son of Owen, the beloved Prince,
Who never for injustice reared his arm.
Respect his enterprize; ye Ocean Waves !
Ye Winds of Heaven, waft Madoc on his way !
The Waves of Ocean, and the Winds of Heaven
Became his ministers, and Madoc found
The world he sought.

Who seeks the better land?

Who mounts the vessel for the world of peace?
 He who hath felt the throb of pride, to hear
 Our old illustrious annals; who was taught
 To lisp the fame of Arthur, to revere
 Our Caratach's unconquered soul, and call
 That gallant chief his countryman, who led
 The wrath of Britain, from her chalky shores.
 To drive the Roman robber. He who loves
 His country, and who feels his country's shame,
 Whose bones amid a land of servitude
 Could never rest in peace; who, if he saw
 His children slaves, would feel a pang in heaven, . .
 He mounts the bark, to seek for liberty.

Who seeks the better land? The wretched one,
 Whose joys are blasted all, whose heart is sick,
 Who hath no hope, to whom all change is gain,
 To whom remembered pleasures strike a pang
 Which only guilt should know, . . he mounts the bark.
 The Bard will mount the bark of banishment;
 The harp of Cambria shall, in other lands,
 Remind the Cambrian of his fathers fame; . .
 The Bard will seek the land of liberty,
 The world of peace. . . O Prince, receive the Bard!

He ceased the song. His cheek, now fever-flushed,
 Was turned to Madoc, and his asking eye
 Lingered on him in hope; nor lingered long
 The look expectant; forward sprung the Prince,
 And stretched to Caradoc the right-hand pledge,
 And for the comrade of his enterprize,
 With joyful welcome, hailed the joyful Bard.

Nor needed now the Searcher of the Sea
 Announce his enterprize, by Caradoc
 In song announced so well; from man to man
 The busy murmur spread, while from the Stone
 Of Covenant the sword was taken up,
 And from the Circle of the Ceremony
 The Bards went forth, their meeting now fulfilled.
 The multitude, unheeding all beside,
 Of Madoc and his noble enterprize
 Held stirring converse on their homeward way,
 And spread abroad the tidings of the Land,
 Where Plenty dwelt with Liberty and Peace.

XII.

So in the court of Powys pleasantly,
With hawk and hound afield, and harp in hall,
The days went by ; till Madoc, for his heart
Was with Cadwallon, and in early spring
Must he set forth to join him over-sea,
Took his constrained farewell. To Dinevawr
He hent his way, whence many a time with Rhys
Had he gone forth to smite the Saxon foe.
The Son of Owen greets his father's friend
With reverential joy : nor did the Lord
Of Dinevawr with cold or deadened heart
Welcome the Prince he loved, though not with joy
Unmingled now, nor the proud consciousness
Which in the man of tried and approved worth
Could bid an equal hail. Henry had seen
The Lord of Dinevawr between his knees
Vow homage : yea, the Lord of Dinevawr

XII. 111

Had knelt in homage to that Saxon king,
Who set a price upon his father's head,
That Saxon, on whose soul his mother's blood
Cried out for vengeance. Madoc saw the shame
Which Rhys would fain have hidden, and, in grief
For the degenerate land, rejoiced at heart
That now another country was his home.

Musing on thoughts like these, did Madoc roam
Alone, along the Towy's winding shore.
The beavers in its bank had hollowed out
Their social place of dwelling, and had dammed
The summer-current, with their perfect art
Of instinct, erring not in means nor end.
But as the floods of spring had broken down
Their barrier, so its breaches unrepaired
Were left, and round the piles, which deeper-driven
Still held their place, the eddying waters whirled.
Now in those habitations desolate
One sole survivor dwelt: him Madoc saw,
Labouring alone, beside his hermit house;
And in that mood of melancholy thought,..
For in his boyhood he had loved to watch
Their social work, and for he knew that man
In bloody sport had well-nigh rooted out

XII. 112

The poor community, . . the ominous sight
 Became a grief and burthen. . Eve came on;
 The dry leaves rustled to the wind, and fell
 And floated on the stream; there was no voice
 Save of the mournful rooks, who overhead
 Winged their long line; for fragrance of-sweet flowers,
 Only the odour of the autumnal leaves; . .
 All sights and sounds of sadness. . . And the place
 To that despondent mood was ministrant; . .
 Among the hills of Gwyneth, and its wilds
 And mountain glens, perforce he cherished still
 The hope of mountain liberty; they braced
 And knit the heart and arm of hardihood; . .
 But here, in these green meads, by these low slopes
 And hanging groves, attempered to the scene,
 His spirit yielded. As he loitered on,
 There came toward him one in peasant garb,
 And called his name; . . he started at the sound,
 For he had heeded not the man's approach;
 And now that sudden and familiar voice
 Came on him, like a vision. So he stood
 Gazing, and knew him not in the dim light,
 Till he again cried, Madoc! . . then he woke,
 And knew the voice of Ririd, and sprang on,
 And fell upon his neck, and wept for joy
 And sorrow.

O my brother! Ririd cried,
 Long, very long it is since I have heard
 The voice of kindness! . . . Let me go with thee!
 I am a wanderer in my father's land, . . .
 Hoel he killed, and Yorwerth hath he slain;
 Llewelyn hath not where to hide his head
 In his own kingdom; Rodri is in chains. . .
 Let me go with thee, Madoc, to some land
 Where I may look upon the sun, nor dread
 The light that may betray me; where at night
 I may not, like a hunted beast, rouse up,
 If the leaves rustle over me.

The Lord

Of Ocean struggled with his swelling heart.
 Let me go with thee? . . . but thou didst not doubt
 Thy brother. . . . Let thee go? . . . with what a joy,
 Ririd, would I collect the remnant left,
 The wretched remnant now of Owen's house,
 And mount the bark of willing banishment,
 And leave the tyrant to his Saxon friends,
 And to his Saxon yoke! . . . I urged him thus,
 Curbed down my angry spirit, and besought
 Only that I might bid our brethren come,
 And share my exile. And he spurned my prayer! . . .
 Thou hast a gentle pleader at his court;

She may prevail ; till then abide thou here, . .
 But not in this, the garb of fear and guilt.
 Come thou to Dinevawr, . . assume thyself ; . .
 The good old Rhys will bid thee welcome there,
 And the Great Palace, like a sanctuary,
 Is safe. If then Queen Emma's plea should fail,
 My timely bidding hence shall summon thee,
 When I shall spread the sail. . . Nay! hast thou learnt
 Suspicion? . . Rhys is noble, and no deed
 Of treachery ever sullied his fair fame.

Madoc then led his brother to the hall
 Of Rhys. I bring to thee a supplicant,
 O King, he cried ; thou wert my father's friend ;
 And till our barks be ready in the spring,
 I know that here the persecuted son
 Of Owen will be safe.

A welcome guest !

The old warrior cried ; by his good father's soul,
 He is a welcome guest at Dinevawr !
 And rising as he spake, he pledged his hand
 In hospitality. . . How now ! quoth he ;
 This raiment ill beseems the princely son
 Of Owen ! . . Ririd at his words was led
 Apart ; they washed his feet, they gave to him

XII. 115

Fine linen, as beseemed his royal race,
The tunic of soft texture woven well,
The broidered girdle, the broad mantle edged
With fur and flowing low, the bonnet last,
Formed of some forest martin's costly spoils.
The Lord of Dinevawr sat at the dice
With Madoc, when he saw him, thus arrayed,
Returning to the hall. Aye! this is well!
The noble Chief exclaimed; 'tis as of yore,
When in Aberfraw, at his father's board,
We sate together, after we had won
Peace and rejoicing, with our own right hands,
By Corwen, where, commixt with Saxon blood,
Along its rocky channel the dark Dee
Rolled darker waters. . . Would that all his house
Had, in their day of trouble, thought of me,
And honoured me like this! David respects
Deheubarth's strength, nor would respect it less,
When such protection leagued its cause with Heaven.

I had forgot his Messenger! quoth he,
Arising from the dice. Go, bid him here!
He came this morning at an ill-starred hour,
To Madoc he pursued; my lazy grooms
Had let the hounds play havoc in my flock,

XII. 116

And my old blood was chafed. I'faith, the King
Hath chosen well his messenger: . . he saw
That, in that mood, I might have rendered him
A hot and hasty answer, and hath waited,
Belike to David's service and to mine,
My better leisure.

Now the Messenger
Entered the hall; Goagan of Powys-land,
He of Caer-Einion was it, who was charged
From Gwyneth to Deheubarth; a brave man,
Of copious speech. He told the royal son
Of Gryffidd, the descendant of the line
Of Rhys-ab-Tudyr-mawr, that he came there
From David, son of Owen, of the stock
Of kingly Cynan. I am sent, said he,
With friendly greeting; and as I receive
Welcome and honour, so, in David's name,
Am I to thank the Lord of Dinevawr.

Tell on! quoth Rhys, the purport and the cause
Of this appeal?

Of late, some fugitives
Came from the South to Mona, whom the King
Received with generous welcome. Some there were
Who blamed his royal goodness; for they said;

XII. . 117

These were the subjects of a rival Prince,
Who, peradventure, would with no such bounty
Cherish a northern suppliant. This they urged,
I know not if from memory of old feuds,
Better forgotten, or in envy. Moved
Hereby, King David swore he would not rest
Till he had put the question to the proof,
Whether, with liberal honour, the Lord Rhys
Would greet his messenger; but none was found,
Of all who had instilled that evil doubt,
Ready to bear this embassy: I heard it,
And did my person tender, . . for I knew
The nature of Lord Rhys of Dinevawr.

Well! quoth the Chief, Goagan of Powys-land,
This honourable welcome that thou seekest,
Wherein may it consist?

In giving me,
Goagan of Powys-land replied, a horse
Better than mine, to bear me home, a suit
Of seemly raiment, and ten marks in coin,
And raiment and two marks to him who leads
My horse's bridle.

For his sake, said Rhys,
Who sent thee, thou shalt have the noblest steed

XII. 118

In all my studs. . . I double thee the marks,
And give the raiment threefold. More than this, . .
Say thou to David, that the guests who sit
At board with me, and drink of my own cup,
Are Madoc and Lord Ririd. Tell the King,
That thus it is Lord Rhys of Dinevawr,
Delighteth to do honour to the sons
Of Owen, of his old and honoured friend

XIII.

Farewell, my brother, cried the Ocean Chief ;
A little while farewell ! as through the gate
Of Dinevawr he past, to pass again
That hospitable threshold never more.
And thou too, O thou good old man ! true friend
Of Owen, and of Owen's house, farewell !
'Twill not be told me, Rhys, when thy grey hairs
Are to the grave gone down ; . . . but oftentimes
In the distant world I shall remember thee,
And think that, come thy summons when it may,
Thou wilt not leave a braver man behind. . . .
Now God be with thee, Rhys !

The old Chief paused

A moment ere he answered, as for pain ;
Then shaking his hoar head, I never yet
Gave thee this hand unwillingly before !
When for a guest I spread the board, my heart

Will think on him, whom ever with most joy
 It leapt to welcome : should I ever lift
 The spear against the Saxon, . . for old Rhys
 Hath that within him yet, that could uplift
 The Cimbric spear, . . I then shall wish his aid,
 Who oft has conquered with me : when I kneel
 In prayer to Heaven, an old man's prayer shall beg
 A blessing on thee !

Madoc answered not,
 But graspt his hand in silence, then sprang up
 And spurred his courser on. A weary way,
 Through forest and o'er fell, Prince Madoc rode.
 And now he skirts the bay whose reckless waves
 Roll o'er the plain of Gwaelod : fair fields,
 And busy towns, and happy villages,
 They overwhelmed in one disastrous day ;
 For they, by their eternal siege, had sapped
 The bulwark of the land, while Seithenyn
 Took of his charge no thought, till, in his sloth
 And riotous cups surprised, he saw the sea
 Roll like an army o'er the levelled mound.
 A supplicant in other courts, he mourned
 His crime and ruin ; in another's court
 The kingly harp of Garanhir was heard,
 Wailing his kingdom wrecked ; and many a Prince,

Warned by the visitation, sought and gained
 A saintly crown, Tyneio, Merini,
 Boda and Brenda and Aelgyvarch,
 Gwynon and Celynin and Gwynodyl.

To Bardsey was the Lord of Ocean bound;
 Bardsey, the holy Islet, in whose soil
 Did many a Chief and many a Saint repose,
 His great progenitors. He mounts the skiff;
 Her canvass swells before the breeze; the sea
 Sings round her sparkling keel, and soon the Lord
 Of Ocean treads the venerable shore.

There was not, on that day, a speck to stain
 The azure heaven; the blessed Sun, alone,
 In unapproachable divinity,
 Careered, rejoicing in his fields of light.
 How beautiful, beneath the bright blue sky,
 The billows heave! one glowing green expanse,
 Save where along the bending line of shore
 Such hue is thrown, as when the peacock's neck
 Assumes its proudest tint of amethyst,
 Embathed in emerald glory. All the flocks
 Of Ocean are abroad: like floating foam,
 The sea-gulls rise and fall upon the waves;

With long protruded neck the cormorants
 Wing their far flight aloft, and round and round
 The plovers wheel, and give their note of joy.
 It was a day that sent into the heart
 A summer feeling : even the insect swarms
 From their dark nooks and coverts issued forth,
 To sport thro one day of existence more ;
 The solitary primrose, on the bank,
 Seemed now as though it had no cause to mourn
 Its bleak autumnal birth ; the Rocks, and Shores,
 The Forest and the everlasting Hills,
 Smiled in that joyous sunshine, ... they partook
 The universal blessing.

To this Isle,

Where his forefathers were consigned to dust,
 Did Madoc come in natural piety ;
 And therefore had he made his coming known,
 Ordering a solemn service for their souls.
 Therefore for this the Church that day was dressed ;
 For this the Abbot, in his alb arrayed,
 At the high altar stood ; for this infused,
 Sweet incense from the waving thuribule
 Rose like a mist, and the grey brotherhood
 Chaunted the solemn mass. And now on high
 The mighty Mystery had been elevate,

XIII. 123

And now around the graves the brethren
In long array proceed : each in his hand,
Tall as the staff of some wayfaring man,
Bears the brown taper, with their daylight flame
Dimming the chearful day. Before the train
The Cross is borne, where, fashioned to the life,
In shape, and size, and ghastly colouring,
The awful Image hangs. Next, in its shrine
Of gold and crystal, by the Abbot held,
The mighty Mystery came; on either hand
Three Priests uphold above, on silver wands,
The purple pall. With holy water next
A father went, therewith, from hyssop branch,
Sprinking the graves ; the while, with one accord,
The solemn psalm of mercy all intoned.

Pure was the faith of Madoc, though his mind
To all this pomp and solemn circumstance
Yielded a willing homage. But the place
Was holy ; . . the dead air, that underneath
Those arches never felt the healthy sun,
Nor the free motion of the elements,
Chilly and damp, infused associate awe :
The sacred odours of the incense still
Floated ; the daylight and the taper-flames

Commingled, dimming each, and each bedimmed ;
 And as the slow procession paced along,
 Still to their hymn, as if in symphony,
 The regular foot-fall sounded; swelling now,
 Their voices in one chorus, loud and deep,
 Rung o'er the echoing aisle ; and when it ceased,
 The silence of that huge and sacred pile
 Came on the heart. What wonder if the Prince
 Yielded his homage now ? the influences
 Of that sweet autumn day made every sense
 Alive to every impulse, . . . and beneath
 The stones whereon he stood, his ancestors
 Were mouldering, dust to dust. Father ! quoth he,
 When now the rites were ended, far away
 It hath been Madoc's lot to pitch his tent
 On other shores ; there, in a foreign land,
 Far from my fathers' burial place, must I
 Be laid to rest ; yet would I have my name
 Be held with theirs in memory. I beseech you,
 Have this a yearly rite for evermore,
 As I will leave endowment for the same ;
 And let me be remembered in the prayer.
 The day shall be a holy day with me,
 While I do live ; they who come after me
 Will hold it holy ; it will be a bond

XIII. 125

Of love and brotherhood, when all beside
Hath been dissolved ; and though wide ocean rolls
Between my people and their mother Isle,
This shall be their communion : They shall send,
Linked in one sacred feeling at one hour,
In the same language, the same prayer to Heaven,
And, each remembering each in piety,
Pray for the others welfare.

The old man

Partook that feeling, and some pious tears
Fell down his aged cheek. Kinsman and son,
It shall be so ! said he ; and thou shalt be
Remembered in the prayer : nor then alone ;
But till my sinking sands be quite run out,
This feeble voice shall, from its solitude,
Go up for thee to Heaven !

And now the bell

Rung out its cheerful summons ; to the hall,
In seemly order, pass the brotherhood :
The serving-men wait with the ready ewer ;
The place of honour to the Prince is given,
The Abbot's right-hand guest ; the viands smoke,
The horn of ale goes round ; and now, the cates
Removed, for days of festival reserved
Comes choicer beverage, clary, hippocras.

And meed mature, that to the goblet's brim
 Sparkles, and sings, and smiles. It was a day
 Of that allowable and temperate mirth,
 Which leaves a joy for memory. Madoc told
 His tale ; and thus, with question and reply
 And chearful intercourse, from noon till nones
 The brethren sate ; and when the quire was done,
 Renewed their converse, till the vesper bell.

And now the Porter called Prince Madoc out,
 To speak with one, he said, who from the land
 Had sought him, and required his private ear.
 Madoc in the moonlight met him : in his hand
 The stripling held an oar, and on his back,
 Like a broad shield, the coracle was hung.
 Uncle ! he cried, and, with a gush of tears,
 Sprung to the glad embrace.

O my brave boy !

Llewelyn ! my dear boy ! with stifled voice,
 And interrupted utterance, Madoc cried,
 And many times he claspt him to his breast,
 And many times drew back and gazed upon him,
 Wiping the tears away which dimmed the sight,
 And told him how his heart had yearned for him
 As with a father's love, and bade him now

XIII. 127

Forsake his lonely haunts and come with him
And sail beyond the seas and share his fate.

No! by my God! the high-hearted youth replied,
It never shall be said Llewelyn left
His father's murderer on his father's throne!
I am the rightful king of this poor land. . .
Go thou, and wisely go; but I must stay,
That I may save my people. Tell me, Uncle,
The story of thy fortunes; I can hear it
Here in this lonely Isle, and at this hour,
Securely.

Nay, quoth Madoc, tell me first,
Where are thy haunts and coverts, and what hope
Thou hast to bear thee up? Why goest thou not
To Mathraval? there would Cyveilioc give
A kinsman's welcome; or at Dinevawr,
The guest of honour shouldst thou be with Rhys;
And he, belike, from David might obtain
Some recompense, though poor.

What recompense?

Exclaimed Llewelyn; what hath he to give,
But life for life? and what have I to claim
But vengeance, and my father Yorwerth's throne?

XIII. 128

If with aught short of that my soul could rest,
Would I not through the wide world follow thee,
Dear Uncle! and fare with thee, well or ill,
And show to thine old age the tenderness
My childhood found from thee! ... What hopes I have
Let time display: Have thou no fear for me!
My bed is made within the ocean-caves,
Of sea-weeds, bleached by many a sun and shower;
I know the mountain dens, and every hold
And fastness of the forest; and I know, ...
What troubles him by day and in his dreams, ...
There's many an honest heart in Gwyneth yet! ...
But tell me thine adventure; that will be
A joy to think of in long winter nights,
When stormy billows make my lullaby.

So, as they walked along the moonlight shore,
Did Madoc tell him all; and still he strove,
By dwelling on that noble end and aim,
That of his actions was the heart and life,
To win him to his wish. It touched the youth;
And when the Prince had ceased, he heaved a sigh,
Long-drawn and deep, as if regret were there.
No, no! he cried, that must not be! lo yonder

My native mountains, and how beautiful
 They rest in the moonlight ! I was nurst among them ;
 They saw my sports in childhood, they have seen
 My sorrows, they have saved me in the hour
 Of danger ; . . I have vowed, that as they were
 My cradle, they shall be my monument ! . .
 But we shall meet again, and thou wilt find me
 When next thou visitest thy native Isle,
 King in Aberfraw !

Never more, Llewelyn ;

Madoc replied, shall I behold the shores
 Of Britain, nor will ever tale of me
 Reach the Green Isle again. With fearful care
 I chuse my little company, and leave
 No traces of our path, where Violence,
 And bloody Zeal, and bloodier Avarice,
 Might find their blasting way.

If it be so, . .

As rightly it should be, the youth replied,
 Thou wilt not know my fate ; . . but this be sure,
 It shall not be inglorious. I have in me
 A hope from Heaven. . . Give me thy blessing, Uncle !

Llewelyn knelt upon the sand, and clasped

XIII. 130

His knees, with lifted head and streaming eyes
Listening. . He rose, and fell on Madoc's neck,
And clasped him, with a silent agony, . .
Then launched his coracle, and took his way,
A lonely traveller on the moonlight sea.

XIV.

Now bath Prince Madoc left the holy Isle,
And homeward to Aberfraw, through the wilds
Of Arvon, bent his course. A little way
He turned aside, by natural impulses
Moved, to behold Cadwallon's lonely hut.
That lonely dwelling stood among the hills,
By a grey mountain-stream ; just elevate
Above the winter torrents did it stand,
Upon a craggy bank ; an orchard slope
Arose behind, and joyous was the scene,
In early summer, when those antic trees
Shone with their blushing blossoms, and the flax
Twinkled beneath the breeze its liveliest green.
But, save the flax-field and that orchard slope,
All else was desolate, and now all wore
One sober hue ; the narrow vale which wound
Among the hills, was grey with rocks, that peered

Above its shallow soil; the mountain side
 Was loose with stones bestrewn, which, oftentimes
 Sliding beneath the foot of straggling goat,
 Clattered adown the steep, or huger crags,
 Which, when the coming frost should loosen them,
 Would thunder down. All things assorted well
 With that grey mountain hue; the low stone lines,
 Which scarcely seemed to be the work of man,
 The dwelling, rudely reared with stones unknown,
 The stubble flax, the crooked apple-trees,
 Grey with their fleecy moss and misseltoe,
 The white-barked birch, now leafless, and the ash,
 Whose knotted roots were like the rifted rock,
 Thro' which they forced their way. Adown the vale,
 Broken by stones, and o'er a stoney bed,
 Rolled the loud mountain-stream.

When Madoc came,

A little child was sporting by the brook,
 Floating the fallen leaves, that he might see them
 Whirl in the eddy now, and now be driven
 Down the descent, now on the smoother stream
 Sail onward, far away. But when he heard
 The horse's tramp, he raised his head, and watched
 The Prince, who now dismounted and drew nigh.
 The little boy still fixed his eyes on him,

XIV. 133

His bright blue eyes ; the wind just moved the curls
That clustered round his brow ; and so he stood,
His rosy cheeks still lifted up to gaze,
In innocent wonder. Madoc took his hand,
And now had asked his name, and if he dwelt
There in the hut, when from that cottage door
A woman came, who, seeing Madoc, stopt
With such a fear, . . . for she had cause for fear, . . .
As when a bird, returning to her nest,
Turns to a tree beside, if she behold
Some prying boy too near the dear retreat.
Howbeit, advancing soon, she now approached:
The approaching Prince, and timidly enquired,
If, on his wayfare, he had lost the track,
That thither he had strayed. Not so, replied
The gentle Prince ; but having known this place,
And its old habitants, I came once more
To view the lonely hut among the hills.
Hath it been long your dwelling ?

Some few years,

Here we have dwelt, quoth she, my child and I.
Will it please you enter, and partake such fare
As we can give ? Still timidly she spake,
But gathering courage from the gentle mien.
Of him with whom she conversed. Madoc thanked

The friendly proffer, and toward the hut
 They went, and in his arms he took the boy.
 Who is his father? said the Prince, but wished
 The word unuttered; for thereat her cheek
 Was flushed with sudden heat, and manifest pain;
 And she replied, He perished in the war.

They entered now her home; she spread the board,
 Bringing fresh curds, and cheese like curd so white,
 The orchard fruits, and what sweet beverage
 Her bees, who now were slumbering in the hive,
 Had toiled to purvey all the summer long.
 Three years, said Madoc, have gone by, since here
 I found a timely welcome, overworn
 With toil, and sorrow, and sickness: .. three long years!
 'Twas when the battle had been waged hard by,
 Upon the plain of Arvon.

She grew pale,
 Suddenly pale; and seeing that he marked
 The change, she told him, with a feeble voice,
 That was the fatal fight which widowed her.

O Christ! cried Madoc, 'tis a grief to think
 How many a gallant Briton died that day,
 In that accursed strife! I trod the field

XIV. 135

When all was over, . . I beheld them heaped . . .
Aye, like ripe corn within the reaper's reach,
Strewn round the bloody spot where Hoel lay ;
Brave as he was, himself cut down at last,
Oppressed by numbers, gashed with wounds, yet still
Clenching, in his dead hand, the broken sword ! . .
But you are moved, . . you weep at what I tell.
Forgive me, that, renewing my own grief,
I should have wakened yours ! Did you then know
Prince Hoel ?

She replied, Oh no ! my lot
Was humble, and my loss a humble one ;
Yet was it all to me ! They say, quoth she, . . .
And, as she spake, she struggled to bring forth,
With painful voice, the interrupted words, . . .
They say Prince Hoel's body was not found ;
But you, who saw him dead, perchance can tell
Where he was laid, and by what friendly hand.

Even where he fell, said Madoc, is his grave ;
For he who buried him was one whose faith
Recked not of boughten prayers, nor passing bell.
There is a hawthorn grows beside the place,
A solitary tree, nipt by the winds,
That it doth seem a fitting monument

XIV. 136

For one untimely slain. . . But wherefore dwell we
On this ungrateful theme?

He took a harp
Which stood beside, and, passing o'er its chords,
Made music. At the touch the child drew nigh,
Pleased by the sounds, and leant on Madoc's knee,
And bade him play again : So Madoc played,
For he had skill in minstrelsy, and raised
His voice, and sung Prince Hoel's lay of love.

I have harnessed thee, my Steed of shining grey,
And thou shalt bear me to the dear white walls.
I love the white walls by the verdant bank,
That glitter in the sun, where Bashfulness
Watches the silver sea-mew sail along.
I love that glittering dwelling, where we hear
The ever-sounding waves ; for there she dwells,
The shapely Maid, fair as the ocean spray,
Her cheek as lovely as the apple flower,
Or summer evening's glow. I pine for her ;
In crowded halls my spirit is with her ;
Through the long sleepless night I think on her ;
And happiness is gone, and health is lost,
And fled the flush of youth, and I am pale
As the pale ocean on a sunless morn.

XIV. 137

F pine away for her, yet pity her,
That she should spurn a love so true as mine..

He ceased, and laid his hand upon the child, ..
And didst thou like the song? The child replied, ..
Oh yes! it is a song my mother loves,
And so I love it too. He stoopt, and kissed
The boy, who still was leaning on his knee,
Already grown familiar. I should like
To take thee with me, quoth the Ocean Lord,
Over the seas.

Thou art Prince Madoc, then! ...
The mother cried, ... thou art indeed the Prince!
That song ... that look! ... and at his feet she fell,
Panting. . . Oh take him, Madoc! save the child!
Thy brother Hoel's orphan!

Long it was
Ere that in either agitated heart
The tumult could subside. One while the Prince
Gazed on the child, tracing intently there
His brother's lines; and now he caught him up,
And kissed his cheek, and gazed again, till all
Was dim and dizzy; then blest God, and vowed
That he should never need a father's love.

XIV. 138

At length, when copious tears had now relieved
Her burthened heart, and many a broken speech
In tears had died away, O Prince, she cried,
Long hath it been my dearest prayer to heaven,
That I might see thee once, and to thy love
Commit this friendless boy! For many a time,
In phrase so fond did Hoel tell thy worth,
That it hath wakened misery in me
To think, I could not as a sister claim
Thy love! and therefore was it that till now
Thou knewest me not; for I intreated him,
That he would never let thy virtuous eye
Look on my guilt, and make me feel my shame.
Madoc, I did not dare to see thee then, . .
Thou wilt not scorn me now, . . for I have now
Forgiven myself; and, while I here performed
A mother's duties in this solitude,
Have felt myself forgiven.

With that she clasped
His hand, and bent her face on it, and wept.
Anon collecting, she pursued, . . My name
Is Llaian: by the chance of war I fell
Into his power, when all my family
Had been cut off, all in one hour of blood.
He saved me from the ruffian's hand, he soothed,

With tenderest care, my sorrow. . . You can tell
 How gentle he could be, and how his eyes,
 So full of life and kindness, could win
 All hearts to love him. Madoc, I was young;
 I had no living friend; . . and when I gave
 This infant to his arms, when with such joy
 He viewed it o'er and o'er again, and pressed
 A father's kiss upon its cheek, and turned
 To me, and made me feel more deeply yet
 A mother's deep delight, . . oh! I was proud
 To think my child in after years should say,
 Prince Hoel was his father!

Thus I dwelt,

In the white dwelling by the verdant bank, . .
 Though not without my melancholy hours, . .
 Happy. The joy it was when I beheld
 His steed of shining grey come hastening on,
 Across the yellow sand! . . Alas! ere long,
 King Owen died. I need not tell thee, Madoc,
 With what a deadly and forefeeling fear
 I heard how Hoel seized his father's throne,
 Nor with what ominous woe I welcomed him,
 In that last little miserable hour
 Ambition gave to love. I think his heart,
 Brave as it was, misgave him. When I spake

Of David and my fears, he smiled upon me ;
 But 'twas a smile that came not from the heart, ...
 A most ill-boding smile ! .. O Madoc ! Madoc !
 You know not with what misery I saw
 His parting steps, .. with what a dreadful hope
 I watched for tidings ! ... And at length it came, ..
 Came like a thunderbolt ! .. I sought the field :
 O Madoc, there were many widows there,
 But none with grief like mine ! I looked around ;
 I dragged aside the bodies of the dead,
 To search for him, in vain ; .. and then a hope
 Seized me, which it was agony to lose !

Night came. I did not heed the storm of night !
 But for the sake of this dear babe, I sought
 Shelter in this lone hut : 'twas desolate ;
 And when my reason had returned, I thought,
 That here the child of Hoel might be safe,
 Till we could claim thy care. But thou, meantime,
 Didst go to roam the ocean ; so I learnt
 To bound my wishes here. The carkanet,
 The embroidered girdle, and what other gauds
 Were once my vain adornment, soon were changed
 For things of profit, goats and bees, and this,
 The tuneful solace of my solitude.

XIV. 141

Madoc, the harp is as a friend to me ;
I sing to it the songs which Hoel loved,
And Hoel's own sweet lays ; it comforts me,
And gives me joy in grief.

Often I grieved,

To think the son of Hoel should grow up
In this unworthy state of poverty ;
Till Time, who softens all regrets, had worn
That vain regret away, and I became
Humbly resigned to God's unerring will.
To him I looked for healing, and he poured
His balm into my wounds. I never formed
A prayer for more, . . and lo ! the happiness
That he hath, of his mercy, sent me now !

XV.

On Madoc's docile courser Llaian sits,
Holding her joyful boy ; the Chief beside
Paces afoot, and, like a gentle Squire,
Leads her loose bridle ; from the saddle-bow
His shield and helmet hang, and with the lance,
Staff-like, he stayed his steps. Before the sun
Had climbed his southern eminence, they left
The mountain-feet ; and hard by Bangor now,
Travelling the plain before them, they espy
A princely cavalcade, for so it seemed,
Of knights, with hawk in hand, and hounds in leash,
Squires, Pages, Serving-men, and armed Grooms,
And many a sumpter-beast and laden wain,
Far following in their rear. The bravery
Of glittering bauldricks, and of plumed crests,
Embroidered surcoats, and emblazoned shields,
And lances, whose long streamers played aloft,

XV. 143

Made a rare pageant, as with sound of tramp,
Tambour and cittern, proudly they went on ;
And ever, at the foot-fall of their steeds,
The tinkling horse-bells, in rude symphony,
Accorded with the joy.

What have we here ?

Quoth Madoc then, to one who stood beside
The threshold of his osier-woven hut.

'Tis the great Saxon Prelate, he returned,
Come hither for some end, I wis not what,
Only be sure no good ! .. How stands the tide ?
Said Madoc ; Can we pass ? .. 'Tis even at flood,
The man made answer, and the Monastery
Will have no hospitality to spare
For one of Wales to-day. Be ye content
To guest with us.

He took the Prince's sword ;
The daughter of the house brought water then,
And washed the stranger's feet ; the board was spread,
And o'er the bowl they communed of the days
Ere ever Saxon set his hateful foot
Upon the beautiful Isle.

As so they sate,
The bells of the Cathedral rung abroad
Unusual summons. What is now ? exclaimed

Prince Madoc; let us go! . . . Forthwith they went,
 He and his host, their way. They found the rites
 Begun; the mitred Baldwin, in his hand
 Holding a taper, at the altar stood.

Let him be cursed! . . . were his words which first
 Assailed their ears, . . . living and dead, in limb
 And life, in soul and body, be he curst
 Here and hereafter! Let him feel the curse
 At every moment, and in every act,
 By night and day, in waking and in sleep!
 We cut him off from Christian fellowship;
 Of Christian sacraments we deprive his soul;
 Of Christian burial we deprive his corpse;
 And when that carrion to the Fiends is left
 In unprotected earth, thus let his soul
 Be quenched in hell!

He dashed upon the floor
 His taper down, and all the ministring Priests
 Extinguished each his light, to consummate
 That imprecation.

Whom is it ye curse,
 Cried Madoc, with these horrors? They replied,
 The contumacious Prince of Mathraval,
 Cyveilioc.

What! quoth Madoc, and his eye

Grew terrible, . . . Who is he that sets his foot
 In Gwyneth here, and with this hellish hate
 Insults the blameless Lord of Mathraual? . . .

We wage no war with women nor with Priests ;
 But if there be a knight amid your train,
 Who dare come boldly forth, and to my face
 Say that Cyveilioc hath deserved your curse,
 Lo ! here stand I, Prince Madoc, who will make
 That wretched man cry craven in the dust,
 And eat his lying words !

Be temperate !

Quoth one of Baldwin's Priests, who, Briton born,
 Had known Prince Madoc in his father's court ;
 It is our charge, throughout this Christian land
 To call upon all Christian men to join
 The armies of the Lord, and take the cross ;
 That so, in battle with the Infidels,
 The palm of victory or of martyrdom,
 Glorious alike, may be their recompense.
 This holy badge, whether in godless scorn,
 Or for the natural blindness of his heart,
 Cyveilioc hath refused ; thereby incurring
 The pain, which, not of our own impulse, we
 Inflict upon his soul, but at the will

Of our most holy Father, from whose word
Lies no appeal on earth.

'Tis well for thee,
Intemperate Prince! said Baldwin, that our blood
Flows with a calmer action than thine own!
Thy brother David hath put on the cross,
To our most pious warfare piously
Pledging his kingly sword. Do thou the like,
And for this better object lay aside
Thine other enterprize, which, lest it rob
Judea of one single Christian arm,
We do condemn as sinful. Follow thou
The banner of the church to Palestine;
So shalt thou expiate this rash offence,
Against the which we else should fulminate
Our ire, did we not see in charity,
And therefore rather pity than resent,
The rudeness of this barbarous land.

At that,
Scorn tempering wrath, yet anger sharpening scorn,
Madoc replied, Barbarians as we are,
Lord Prelate, we received the law of Christ
Many a long age before your pirate sires
Had left their forest dens: nor are we now

XV. 147

To learn that law from Norman or from Dane,
Saxon, Jute, Angle, or whatever name
Suit best your mongrel race! Ye think, perchance,
That, like your own poor woman-hearted King,
We too in Gwyneth are to take the yoke
Of Rome upon our necks ; . . but ye may tell
Your Pope, that when I sail upon the seas,
I shall not strike a topsail for the breath
Of all his maledictions !

Saying thus,

He turned away, lest farther speech might call
Farther reply, and kindle farther wrath,
More easy to avoid than to allay.
Therefore he left the church ; and soon his mind
To gentler mood was won, by social talk,
And the sweet prattle of that blue-eyed boy,
Whom in his arms he fondled.

But when now

Evening had settled, to the door there came
One of the brethren of the Monastery,
Who called Prince Madoc forth. Apart they went,
And in the low suspicious voice of fear,
Though none was nigh, the Monk began. Be calm,
Prince Madoc, while I speak, and patiently
Hear to the end. Thou knowest that, in his life,

Becket did excommunicate thy sire
 For his unlawful marriage ; but the King,
 Feeling no sin in conscience, heeded not
 The inefficient censure. Now, when Baldwin
 Beheld his monument to-day, impelled,
 As we do think, by anger against thee,
 He swore that, even as Owen in his deeds
 Disowned the Church when living, even so
 The Church disowned him dead, and that his corpse
 No longer should be suffered to pollute
 The sanctuary . . . Be patient, I beseech,
 And hear me out. Gerald at this, who felt
 A natural horror, sought, . . . as best he knew
 The haughty Primate's temper, . . . to dissuade
 By politic argument, and chiefly urged
 The quick and fiery nature of our nation, . . .
 How, at the sight of such indignity,
 They would arise in arms, and limb from limb
 Tear peace-meal him and all his company.
 So far did this prevail, that he will now
 Commit the deed in secret ; and, this night,
 Thy father's body from its resting-place,
 O Madoc ! shall be torn, and cast aside
 In some unhallowed pit, with foul disgrace
 And contumelious wrong.

XV. 149

Sayest thou to-night ?

Quoth Madoc. . . . Aye, at midnight, he replied,
Shall this impiety be perpetrated.
Therefore hath Gerald, for the reverence
He bears to Owen's royal memory,
Sent thee the tidings. Now be temperate
In thy just anger, Prince ! and shed no blood.
Thou knowest how dearly the Plantagenet
Atones for Becket's death ; and be thou sure,
Though thou thyself shouldst sail beyond the storm,
That it would fall on Britain.

While he spake,
Madoc was still ; the feeling worked too deep
For speech, or visible sign. At length he cried,
What if amid their midnight villainy
I should appear among them ?

It were well,
The Monk replied, if, at a sight like that,
Thou canst with-hold thy hand.

Oh, fear me not !
Good and true friend, said Madoc. I am calm ;
And calm as thou beholdest me will prove
In word and action. Quick I am to feel
Light ills, . . perhaps o'er-hasty : summer gnats,
Finding my cheek unguarded, may infix

Their skin-deep stings, to vex and irritate ;
 But if the wolf, or forest boar be nigh,
 I am awake to danger. Even so
 Bear I a mind of steel and adamant
 Against all greater wrongs. My heart hath now
 Received its impulse ; and thou shalt behold
 How in this strange and hideous circumstance
 I shall find profit. . . . Only, my true friend,
 Let me have entrance.

At the western porch,
 Between the complines and the matin-bell,
 The Monk replied ; come ! and the ready door
 Shall yield. Thy single person will suffice ;
 For Baldwin knows his danger, and the hour
 Of guilt or fear convicts him, both alike
 Opprobrious. Now, farewell !

Then Madoc took
 His host aside, and in his private ear
 Told him his purport, and wherein his help
 Was needed. Night came on ; the hearth was heapt,
 The women went to rest. They twain, the while,
 Sate at the board, and while the untasted bowl
 Stood by them, watched the glass whose falling sands
 Told out the weary hours. The hour is come ;
 Prince Madoc helmed his head, and from his neck

He slung the bugle-horn ; they took their shields,
 And lance in hand went out. And now arrived,
 The bolts give back before them, and the gate
 Rolls on its heavy hinge.

Beside the grave

Stood Baldwin and the Prior, who, albeit
 Cambrian himself, in fear and awe obeyed
 The lordly Primate's will. They stood and watched
 The ministers perform the irreverent work.
 And now with spade and mattock have they broken
 Into the house of death, and now have they
 From the stone coffin wrenched the iron cramps,
 When sudden interruption startled them,
 And, clad in complete mail from head to foot,
 They saw the Prince come on. Their tapers gleamed
 Upon his visage, as he wore his helm
 Open ; and when in that pale countenance, . .
 For the strong feeling blanched his cheek, . . they saw
 His father's living lineaments, a fear
 Like ague shook them. But anon that fit
 Of scared imagination to the sense
 Of other peril yielded, when they heard
 Prince Madoc's dreadful voice. Stay! he exclaimed, . .
 For now they would have fled ; . . stir not a man, . .
 Or if I once put breath into this horn,

All Wales will hear, as if dead Owen called
 For vengeance from that grave. Stir not a man,
 Of not a man shall live! The doors are watched,
 And ye are at my mercy.

But at that,
 Baldwin from the altar seized the crucifix,
 And held it forth to Madoc, and cried out,
 He who strikes me, strikes Him! forbear, on pain
 Of endless————

Peace quoth Madoc, and profane not
 The holy Cross, with those polluted hands
 Of midnight sacrilege! . . . Peace! I harm thee not, . .
 Be wise, and thou art safe. . . For thee, thou knowest,
 Prior, that if thy treason were divulged,
 David would hang thee on thy steeple top,
 To feed the steeple daws. Obey, and live!
 Go, bring fine linen, and a coffer meet
 To bear these relics; and do ye, meanwhile,
 Proceed upon your work.

They at his word
 Raised the stone cover, and displayed the dead,
 In royal grave-cloths habited, his arms
 Crossed on the breast, with precious gums and spice
 Fragrant, and incorruptibly preserved.
 At Madoc's bidding, round the corpse they wrap

The linen web, fold within fold involved :
They laid it in the coffer, and with cloth
At head and foot filled every interval,
And prest it down compact ; they closed the lid,
And Madoc with his signet sealed it thrice.
Then said he to his host, Bear thou, at dawn,
This treasure to the ships. My father's bones
Shall have their resting place, where mine one day
May moulder by their side. He shall be free
In death, who, living, did so well maintain
His and his country's freedom. As for ye,
For your own safety, ye, I ween, will keep
My secret safe. So saying, he went his way.

XVI.

Now hath the Lord of Ocean once again
Set foot in Mona. Llaian there receives
Sisterly greeting from the royal maid,
Who, while she tempers to the public eye
Her welcome, safely to the boy indulged
In fond endearments of instinctive love.
When the first flow of joy was overpast,
How went the equipment on, the Prince enquired.
Nay, brother, quoth Goervyl, ask thou that
Of Urien ; .. it hath been his sole employ
Daily, from cock-crow until even-song,
That he hath laid aside all other thoughts,
Forgetful even of me ! She said, and smiled
Playful reproach upon the good old man,
Who, in such chiding as affection loves,
Dallying with terms of wrong, returned rebuke.
There, Madoc ! pointing to the shore, he cried,

XVI. 155

There are they moored ; six gallant barks, as trim
And worthy of the sea, as ever yet
Gave canvass to the gale. The mariners
Flock to thy banner, and the call hath roused
Many a brave spirit. Soon as Spring shall serve,
There need be no delay. I should depart
Without one wish that lingers, could we bear
Ririd from hence, and break poor Rodri's chains,
Thy lion-hearted brother ; .. and that boy,
If he were with us, Madoc ! that dear boy
Llewelyn !

Sister, said the Prince at that,
How sped the Queen ?

Oh Madoc ! she replied,
A hard and unrelenting heart hath he.
The gentle Emma told me she had failed,
And that was all she told ; but in her eye
I could see sorrow struggling. She complains not,
And yet, I know, in bitterness laments
The hour, which brought her as a victim here.

Then I will seek the Monarch, Madoc cried ;
And forth he went. Cold welcome David gave,
Such as might chill a suppliant ; but the Prince
Fearless began. I found at Dinevawr

XVI. 156

Our brother Ririd, and he made his suit
That he might follow me, a banished man.
He waits thy answer at the court of Rhys.
Now I beseech thee, David, say to him
His father's hall is open !

Then the king
Replied, I told thee, Madoc, thy request
Displeased me heretofore ; I warned thee, too,
To shun the rebel ; yet my messenger
Tells me, the guests at Dinevawr, who sate
At board with Rhys, and drank of his own cup,
Were Madoc and Lord Ririd. . . Was this well,
This open disobedience to my will,
And my express command ?

Madoc subdued
His rising wrath. If I should tell thee, Sire,
He answered, by what chance it so fell out,
I should of disobedience stand excused,
Had that been here a crime. Yet think again,
David, and let thy better mind prevail !
I am his surety here ; he comes alone ;
The strength of yonder armament is mine ;
And when did I deceive thee ? . . I did hope,
For natural love and public decency,
That ye would part in friendship . . . let that pass !

XVI. 157

He may remain, and join me in the hour
Of embarkation. But, for thine own sake,
Cast off these vile suspicions, and the fear
That makes its danger! Call to mind, my brother,
The rampart that we were to Owen's throne!
Are there no moments when the thoughts and loves
Of other days return? .. Let Rodri loose!
Restore him to his birth-right! .. Why wouldst thou
Hold him in chains, when benefits would bind
His noble spirit?

Leave me! cried the King;
Thou knowest the theme is hateful to my ear.
I have the mastery now, and idle words,
Madoc, shall never thrust me from the throne,
Which this right arm in battle hardly won.
There must he lie till Nature set him free,
And so deliver both. Trespass no more!

A little yet bear with me, Madoc cried.
I leave this land for ever; let me first
Behold my brother Rodri, lest he think
My summer love be withered, and in wrath
Remember me hereafter.

Leave me, Madoc!
Speedily, ere indulgence grow a fault,

XVI. 158

Exclaimed the Monarch. Do not tempt my wrath.
Thou knowest me!

Aye! the Ocean Prince replied,
I know thee, David, and I pity thee,
Thou poor, suspicious, miserable man!
Friend hast thou none, except thy country's foe,
That hateful Saxon, he whose bloody hand
Plucked out thy brethren's eyes; and for thy kin,
'Them hast thou made thy perilous enemies.
What if the Lion Rodri were abroad?
What if Llewelyn's banner were displayed?
The sword of England could not save thee then.
Frown not, and menace not! for what am I,
That I should fear thine anger? .. And with that
He turned indignant from the wrathful King.

XVII.

Winter hath past away ; the vernal storms
Have spent their rage, the ships are stored, and now
To-morrow they depart. That day a Boy,
Weary and foot-sore, to Aberfraw came,
Who to Goervyl's chamber made his way,
And caught the hem of her garment, and exclaimed,
A boon, . . . a boon, . . . dear Lady ! nor did he
Wait more reply than that encouragement,
Which her sweet eye and lovely smile bestowed ; . . .
I am a poor, unhappy, orphan boy,
Born to fair promises and better hopes,
But now forlorn. Take me to be your page ! . . .
For blessed Mary's sake, refuse me not !
I have no friend on earth, nor hope but this.

The Boy was fair ; and though his eyes were swoln,
And cheek defiled with tears, and though his voice
Came choaked by grief, yet to that earnest eye

XVII. 160

And supplicating voice so musical,
It had not, sure, been easy to refuse
The boon he begged. I cannot grant thy suit,
Goervyl cried, but I can aid it, boy! . . .
Go ask of Madoc! . . . and herself arose,
And led him where her brother on the shore
That day the last embarkment oversaw.
Mervyn then took his mantle by the skirt,
And knelt, and made his suit; she too began
To sue, but Madoc, smiling on the Maid,
Won by the virtue of the countenance
That looked for favour, lightly gave the yes.

Where wert thou, Caradoc, when that fair boy
Told his false tale? for hadst thou heard the voice,
The gentle voice, so musically sweet,
And seen that earnest eye, it would have healed
Thy wounded heart, and thou hadst voyaged on,
The happiest man that ever yet forsook
His native country! He, on board the bark,
Leant o'er the vessel-side, and there he stood
And gazed, almost unconscious that he gazed,
Toward yon distant mountains where she dwelt,
Senena, his beloved. Caradoc,
Senena, thy beloved, is at hand!

XVII. 161

Her golden locks are clipt, and her blue eye
Is wandering through the throng in search of thee,
For whose dear sake she hath forsaken all.
You deem her false, that her frail constancy
Shrunk from her father's anger, that she lives
Another's victim bride; but she hath fled
From that unnatural anger; hath escaped
The unnatural union; she is on the shore,
Senena, blue-eyed Maid, a seemly boy,
To share thy fortunes, to reward thy love,
And to the land of peace to follow thee,
Over the ocean waves.

Now all is done.

Stores, beeves, and flocks, and water all aboard;
The dry East blows, and not a sign of change
Stains the clear firmament. The Sea Lord sate
At the last banquet in his brother's court,
And heard the song: It told of Owen's fame,
When, with his Normen, and the assembled force
Of Guienne and Gascony, and Anjou's strength,
The Flemings aid, and England's chosen troops,
Along the ascent of Berwyn, many a day
The Saxon vainly on his mountain foes
Denounced his wrath: for Mona's dragon sons,
By wary patience, baffled long his force,

XVII. 162

Winning slow Famine to their aid, and helped
By the angry Elements, and Sickness sent
From Heaven, and Fear, that of its vigour robbed
The healthy arm; .. then in quick enterprise
Fell on his weary and disheartened host,
Till with defeat, and loss, and obloquy,
He fled with all his nations. Madoc gave
His spirit to the song; he felt the theme
In every pulse; the recollection came,
Revived and heightened to intenser pain,
That in Aberfraw, in his father's hall,
He never more should share the feast, nor hear
The echoing harp again! His heart was full;
And, yielding to its yearnings, in that mood
Of awful feeling, he called forth the King,
And led him from the palace porch, and stretched
His hand toward the ocean, and exclaimed,
To-morrow over yon wide waves I go;
To-morrow, never to return, I leave
My native land. O David, O my brother,
Turn not impatiently a reckless ear
To that affectionate and natural voice,
Which thou wilt hear no more! Release our brethren!
Recall the wanderers home, and link them to thee
By cordial confidence, by benefits

XVII. 163

Which bless the benefactor. Be not thou
As is the black and melancholy yeugh,
That strikes into the grave its baleful roots,
And prospers on the dead! . . . The Saxon King, . . .
Think not I hate him now; . . . an hour like this
Hath softened all my harsher feelings down;
Nor will I hate him for his sister's sake,
Thy gentle Queen, whom, that great God may bless,
And, blessing her, bless thee and our dear country,
Shall never be forgotten in my prayers; . . .
But he is far away; and should there come
The evil hour upon thee, . . . if thy kin,
Wearied by suffering, and driven desperate,
Should lift the sword, or young Llewelyn raise
His banner, and demand his father's throne, . . .
Were it not trusting to a broken reed,
To lean on England's aid? . . . I urge thee not
For answer now; but sometimes, O my brother!
Sometimes recall to mind my parting words,
As 'twere the death-bed counsel of the friend
Who loved thee best!

The affection of his voice,
So mild and solemn, softened David's heart;
He saw his brother's eyes, suffused with tears,
Shine in the moon-beam as he spake; the King

Remembered his departure, and he felt
 Feelings, that long from his disnatured breast
 Ambition had expelled : he could almost
 Have followed their strong impulse. From the shore
 Madoc, with quick and agitated step,
 Had sought his home ; the monarch slow returned,
 Serious and slow, and laid him down that night
 With painful recollections, and such thoughts
 As might, if heaven had willed it, have matured
 To penitence and peace.

The day is come ;

The adventurers, in Saint Cybi's holy fane,
 Hear the last mass, and, all assoiled of sin,
 Partake the bread of Christian fellowship.
 Then, as the Priest his benediction gave,
 They knelt, in such an awful stillness hushed,
 As with yet more oppression seemed to load
 The oppressed heart. At times, and half supprest,
 Womanly sobs were heard, and manly cheeks
 Were wet with silent tears. Now forth they go,
 And at the portal of the Church unfurl
 Prince Madoc's banner ; at that sight, a shout
 Burst from his followers, and the hills and rocks
 Thrice echoed their acclaim.

XVII. 165

There lie the ships,
Their sails all loose, their streamers rolling out
With sinuous flow and swell, like water-snakes,
Curling aloft ; the waves are gay with boats,
Pinnacle, and barge, and coracle, . . the sea
Swarms, like the shore, with life. Oh what a sight
Of beauty for the unconcerned heart,
If heart there be which unconcerned could view
A sight like this ! . . how yet more beautiful
For him, whose soul can feel and understand
The solemn import ! Yonder they embark,
Youth, beauty, valour, virtue, reverend age ;
Some led by love of noble enterprize,
Others, who, desperate of their country's weal,
Fly from the impending yoke ; all warm alike
With confidence and high heroic hope,
And all in one fraternal bond conjoined
By reverence to their Chief, the best beloved
That ever yet on hopeful enterprize
Led gallant army forth. He, even now
Lord of himself, by faith in God, and love
To man, subdues the feeling of this hour,
The bitterest of his being.

At this time,

Pale, and with feverish eye, the King came up,

XVII. 166

And led him somewhat from the throng apart,
Saying, I sent at day-break to release
Rodri from prison, meaning that with thee
He should depart in peace ; but he was gone !
That very night he had escaped ! .. Perchance,
As I do hope, .. it was thy doing, Madoc ?
Is he aboard the fleet ?

I would he were !

Madoc replied ; with what a lightened heart
Then should I sail away ! Ririd is there
Alone . . . alas ! that this was done so late !
Reproach me not ! half sullenly the King,
Answering, exclaimed ; Madoc, reproach me not !
Thou knowest how hardly I attained the throne ;
And is it strange that I should guard with fear
The precious prize ? .. Now, .. when I would have taken
Thy counsel, .. be the evil on his head !
Blame me not now, my brother, lest sometimes
I call again to mind thy parting words
In sorrow !

God be with thee ! Madoc cried ;
And if, at times, the harshness of a heart,
Too prone to wrath, have wronged thee, let these tears
Efface all faults. I leave thee, O my brother,
With all a brother's feelings !

XVII. 167

So he said,

And grasped, with trembling tenderness, his hand,
Then calmed himself, and moved toward the boat.
Emma, though tears would have their way, and sighs
Would swell, suppressing still all words of woe,
Followed Goervyl to the extremest shore.
But then, as on the plank the maid set foot,
Did Emma, staying her by the hand, pluck out
The crucifix, which next her heart she wore,
In reverence to its relic, and she cried,
Yet, ere we part, change with me ! dear Goervyl, ..
Dear sister, loved too well, or lost too soon, ..
I shall betake me often to my prayers,
Never in them, Goervyl, of thy name
Unmindful ; .. thou too wilt remember me
Still in thine orisons ; .. but God forefend,
That ever misery should make thee find
This Cross thy only comforter !

She said,

And kissed the holy pledge, as each to each
Transferred the mutual gift. Nor could the Maid
Answer for agony, to that farewell ;
She held Queen Emma to her breast, and close
She clasped her with a strong convulsive sob,
Silently. Madoc, too, in silence went,

XVII. 168

But prest a kiss on Emma's lips, and left
His tears upon her cheek. With dizzy eyes
Gazing she stood, nor saw the boat push off; . .
The dashing of the oars awakened her ;
She wipes her tears away, to view once more
Those dear familiar faces ; . . they are dim
In the distance ; never shall her waking eye
Behold them, till that hour of happiness,
When Death hath made her pure for perfect bliss !

Two hearts alone, of all that company,
Of all the thousands who beheld the scene,
Partook unmingled joy. Dumb with delight,
Young Hoel views the ships, and feels the boat
Rock on the heaving waves ; and Llaian felt
Comfort, . . though sad, yet comfort, . . that for her
No eye was left to weep, nor heart to mourn.
Hark ! 'tis the mariners, with voice attuned,
Timing their toil ! and now, with gentle gales,
Slow from the holy haven they depart !

XVIII.

Now hath the evening settled ; the broad Moon
Rolls through the rifted clouds. With gentle gales
Slowly they sail along, when they behold
A boat, with press of sail, and stress of oar,
Speed forward to the fleet ; and now, arrived
Beside the Chieftain's vessel, one enquires
If Madoc be aboard ? the answer given,
Swift he ascended up the lofty side.
With joyful wonder did the Ocean Lord
Again behold Llewelyn ; but he gazed,
Doubtful, upon his comrade's countenance ;
A meagre man, severe of brow, his eye
Stern. Thou dost view me, Madoc, he exclaimed,
As 'twere a stranger's face. I marvel not !
The long afflictions of my prison-house
Have changed me.

XVIII. 170

Rodri! cried the Prince, and fell
Upon his neck; .. last night, subdued at length
By my solicitations, did the King
Send to deliver thee, that thou shouldst share
My happy enterprize; .. and thou art come,
Even to my wish!

Nay, Madoc, nay, not so!
He answered, with a stern and bitter smile;
This gallant boy hath given me liberty,
And I will pay him with his father's throne:
Aye, by my father's soul! .. Last night we fled
The house of bondage, and in the sea-caves
By day we lurked securely. Here I come,
Only to see thee once before I die,
And say farewell, .. dear brother!

Would to God
This purpose could be changed! the Sea Lord cried;
But thou art roused by wrongs, and who shall tame
That lion heart? .. This only, if your lot
Fall favourable, will I beseech of ye,
That to his Queen, the fair Plantagenet,
All honourable humanity ye show,
For her own virtue, and in gratitude,
As she hath pleaded for you, and hath urged
Her husband on your part, till it hath turned

XVIII. 171

His wrath upon herself. Oh! deal ye by her
As by your dearest sister in distress!
For even so dear is she to Madoc's heart:
And now, I know, she from Aberfraw's tower
Watcheth these spots upon the moonlight sea,
And weeps for my departure, and for me
Sends up her prayers, nor thinks that even now
I must make mine to man in her behalf!

Quoth Rodri, Rest assured for her. I swear,
By our dead mother, so to deal with her
As thou thyself wouldst dictate, as herself
Shall wish.

The tears fell fast from Madoc's eyes:
O Britain! O my country! he exclaimed,
For ever thus by civil strife convulsed,
Thy children's blood flowing to satisfy
Thy children's rage, how wilt thou still support
The struggle with the Saxon?

Rodri cried,
Our strife shall not be long. Mona will rise
With joy, to welcome me, her rightful Lord;
And woe be to the King, who rules by fear,
When danger comes against him!

Fear not thou

For Britain! quoth Llewelyn; for not yet
 The country of our fathers shall resign
 Her name among the nations. Though her Sun
 Slope from his eminence, the voice of man
 May yet arrest him on his downward way.
 My dreams by day, my visions in the night,
 Are of her welfare. I shall mount the throne, ..
 Yes, Madoc! and the Bard of years to come,
 Who harps of Arthur's and of Owen's fame,
 Shall with the Worthies of his country rank
 Llewelyn's name. Dear Uncle, fare thee well! ..
 And I could almost wish I had been born
 Of humbler lot, that I might follow thee,
 Companion of this noble enterprize.
 Think of Llewelyn often, who will oft
 Remember thee in love!

For the last time

He graspt his Uncle's hand, and Rodri gave
 The last farewell; then went the twain their way.
 So over ocean, through the moonlight waves,
 Prince Madoc sailed with all his company.
 No nobler crew filled that heroic bark,
 Which bore the first adventurers of the deep

XVIII. 173

To seek the Golden Fleece on barbarous shores :
Nor richlier fraught did that illustrious fleet
Home to the Happy Island hold its way,
When Amadis, with his prime chivalry,
Came from the rescue, proud of Roman spoils,
And Oriana, freed from Roman thrall.



Madoc in Aztlan.







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MADOC.

THE SECOND PART.

I.

Now go your way, ye gallant company!
God and good Angels guard ye as ye go!
Blow fairly, Winds of Heaven! ye Ocean Waves,
Swell not in anger to that fated fleet!
For not of conquest greedy, nor of gold,
Seek they the distant world. . . Blow fairly, Winds!
Waft, Waves of Ocean, well your blessed load!

Fair blew the Winds, and safely did the Waves
Bear that beloved charge. It were a tale

Would rouse adventurous courage in a boy,
Making him long to be a mariner,
That he might rove the main, if I should tell
How pleasantly, for many a summer-day,
Over the sunny sea, with wind at will,
Prince Madoc sailed; and of those happy Isles,
Which had he seen ere that ordained storm
Drove southward his slope course, there he had pitched
His tent, and blest his lot that it had fallen
In land so fair; and human blood had reeked
Daily on Aztlan's cursed altars still.
But other doom was his, more arduous toil
Yet to atchieve, worse danger to endure,
Worse evil to be quelled, and higher good,
That passes not away, educed from ill;
Whereof all unforeseeing, yet for all
Of ready heart, he over ocean sails,
Wafted by gentle winds o'er gentle waves,
As if the elements combined to serve
The perfect Prince, by God and man beloved.
And now how joyfully he views the land,
Skirting, like morning clouds, the dusky sea;
With what a searching eye recalls to mind
Foreland, and creek, and cape; how happy now
Up the great river bends at last his way!

No watchman had been stationed on the height
To seek his sails, . . . for with Cadwallon's hope
Too much of doubt was blended, and of fear ;
Yet thitherward, whene'er he walked abroad,
His face, as if instinctively, was turned ;
And duly morn and eve, Lincoya there,
As if religion led his duteous feet,
Went up to gaze. He on a staff had scored
The promised moons and days ; and many a time,
Counting again its often-told account,
So to beguile impatience, day by day
Smoothed off with more delight the daily notch.
But now that the appointed time was nigh,
Did that perpetual presence of his hope
Haunt him, and mingle with his sleep, and mar
The natural rest, and trouble him by day,
That all his pleasure was at earliest light
To take his station, and at latest eve,
If he might see the sails, where far away
Through wide savannahs rolled the silver stream.
Oh then, with what a sudden start his blood
Flowed from its quickened spring, when far away
He spied the glittering topsails ! for a while
Distrustful of that happy sight, till now
Slowly he sees them rise, and wind along.

Through wide savannahs, up the silver stream.
 Then with a breathless speed he flies to spread
 The joy; and with Cadwallon now descends,
 And drives adown the tide the light canoe,
 And mounts the vessel-side, and once again
 Falls at the Ocean Lord's beloved feet.

First of the general weal did Madoc ask;
 Cadwallon answered, All as yet is well,
 And, by this seasonable aid secured,
 Will well remain. . . Thy father? quoth the Prince.
 Even so, replied Cadwallon, as that eye
 Of hesitation augurs, . . . fallen asleep.
 The good old man remembered thee in death,
 And blest thee ere he died.

By this the shores
 And heights were thronged; from hill to hill, from rock
 To rock, the shouts of welcome rung around.
 Forward they press, to view the man beloved,
 Britons and Hoamen with one common joy
 Hailing their common friend. Happy, that day,
 Was he who heard his name from Madoc's voice;
 Happy who met the greeting of his eye;
 Yea, happy he who shared his general smile,
 Amid the unacknowledged multitude.

Caermadoc, . . by that name Cadwallon's love
Called it, in memory of the absent Prince, . .
Stood in a mountain vale, by rocks and heights,
A natural bulwark, girt. A rocky stream
Which from the fells came down, there spread itself
Into a quiet lake, to compass which
Had been a two hours pleasurable toil ;
And he who from a well-strung bow could send
His shaft across, had needs a sinewy arm,
And might from many an archer, far and near,
Have borne away the bell. Here had the Chief
Chosen his abiding place, for strength preferred,
Where vainly might an host in equal arms
Attempt the difficult entrance ; and for all
Which could delight the eye and heart of man ;
Whate'er of beauty or of usefulness
Heart could desire, or eye behold, being here.
What he had found an idle wilderness
Now gave rich increase to the husbandman,
For Heaven had blest their labour. Flourishing
He left the happy vale ; and now he saw
More fields reclaimed, more habitations reared,
More harvests rising round. The reptile race,
And every beast of rapine, had retired
From man's asserted empire ; and the sound

I. 180

Of axe and dashing oar, and fisher's net,
And song beguiling toil, and pastoral pipe,
Were heard, where late the solitary hills
Gave only to the mountain cataract
Their wild response.

Here, Urien, cried the Prince,
These craggy heights and overhanging groves
Will make thee think of Gwyneth. And this hut,
Rejoined Cadwallon, with its roof of reeds,
Goervyl, is our palace: it was reared
With lighter labour than Aberfraw's towers;
Yet, Lady, safer are its wattled sides
Than Mona's kingly walls. . . Like Gwyneth, said he?
Oh no! we neighbour nearer to the Sun,
And with a more benignant eye the Lord
Of Light beholds us here.

So thus did they
Cheerfully welcome to their new abode
These, who albeit aweary of their way,
And glad to reach at length the place of rest,
Felt their hearts overburthened, and their eyes
Ready to overflow. Yet not the less
The buzz of busy joy was heard around,
Where every dwelling had its guest, and all
Gave the long eve to hospitable mirth.

II.

But when the Lord of Ocean from the stir
And tumult was retired, Cadwallon then
Thus rendered his account.

When we had quelled
The strength of Aztlan, we should have thrown down
Her altars, cast her Idols to the fire,
And on the ruins of her fanes accurst
Planted the Cross triumphant. Vain it is
To sow the seed, where noxious weeds and briars
Must choke it in the growth.

Yet I had hope
The purer influence of exempl'd good
Might to the saving knowledge of the truth
Lead this bedarkened race; and when thy ship
Fell down the stream, to distant Britain bound,
All promised well. . The Strangers' God had proved
Mightier in war, and Aztlan could not chuse

But see, nor, seeing, could she fail to love,
 The freedom of his service. Few were now
 The offerings at her altars, few the youths
 And virgins to the temple-toils devote.
 Therefore the Priests combined to save their craft;
 And soon the rumour ran of evil signs
 And tokens; in the temple had been heard
 Wailings and loud lament; the eternal fire
 Gave dismally a dim and doubtful flame;
 And from the censer, which at morn should steam
 Sweet odours to the sun, a fetid cloud,
 Black and portentous, rose. And now no Priest
 Approached our dwelling. Even the friendly Prince
 Yuhidthiton, was at Caermadoc now
 Rarely a guest; and if that tried good will
 Which once he bore us, did at times appear,
 A sullen gloom, and silence like remorse,
 Followed the imagined crime.

But I the while
 Recked not the brooding of the storm; for now
 My father to the grave was hastening down.
 Patiently did the pious man endure,
 In faith anticipating blessedness,
 Already more than man, in those sad hours
 When man is meanest. I sate by his side,

II. 183

And prayed with him, and talked with him of death,
And life to come. O Madoc ! those were hours
Which, even in anguish, gave my soul a joy :
I think of them in solitude, and feel
The comfort of my faith.

But when that time
Of bitterness was past, and I returned
To daily duties, no suspicious sign
Betokened ill ; the Priests among us came
As heretofore, and I their intercourse
Encouraged as I could, suspecting nought,
Nor conscious of the subtle-minded men
I dealt with, how inveterate in revenge,
How patient in deceit. Lincoya first
Forewarned me of the danger. He, thou knowest,
Had from the death of sacrifice escaped,
And as a slave among a distant tribe,
When seeing us, he felt a hope, that we,
Lords, as he deemed us, of the Elements,
Might pity his oppressed countrymen,
And free them from their bondage. Didst thou hear
How from yon devilish altars he was saved ?
For in the eternal chain his fate and ours
Were linked together then.

The Prince replied,
I did but hear a broken tale. Tell on!

Among the Gods of yon unhappy race,
Tezcalipoca as the chief they rank,
Or with the chief coequal; maker he,
And master of created things esteemed.
He sits upon a throne of trophied skulls,
Hideous and huge; a shield is on his arm,
And with his black right hand he lifts, as though
In wrath, the menacing spear. His festival,
Of all this wicked nation's wicked rites,
With most solemnity and circumstance,
And pomp of hellish piety, is held.
From all whom evil fortune hath subdued
To their inhuman thraldom, they select
Him whom they judge, for comely countenance,
And shapely form, and all good natural gifts,
Worthiest to be the victim; and for this
Was young Lincoya chosen, being, in truth,
The flower of all his nation. For twelve months,
Their custom is, that this appointed youth
Be as the Idol's living image held.
Garbed, therefore, like the Demon Deity,

II. 185

Whene'er he goes abroad, an antic train,
With music and with dance, attend his way ;
The crowd before him fall, and worship him ;
And those infernal Priests, who guard him then
To be their victim and their feast at last,
At morning and at evening incense him,
And mock him with knee-reverence. Twenty days
Before the bloody festival arrive,
As 'twere to make the wretch in love with life,
Four maids, the loveliest of the land, are given
In spousals. With Lincoya all these rites
Duly were kept ; and at the stated time,
Four maids, the loveliest of the land, were his.
Of these was one, whom, even at that hour,
He learnt to love, so excellently good
Was she ; and she loved him and pitied him.
She is the daughter of an aged Priest ;
I oftentimes have seen her ; and, in truth,
Compared with Britain's maids, so beautiful,
Or with the dark-eyed daughters of the South,
She would be lovely still. Her cotton vest
Falls to the knee, and leaves her olive arms
Bare in their beauty ; loose, luxuriant, long,
Flow the black tresses of her glossy hair ;
Mild is her eye's jet lustre ; and her voice ! . .

A soul that harboured evil never breathed
Such winning tones.

Thou knowest how manfully
These tribes, as if insensible to pain,
Welcome their death in battle, or in bonds
Defy their torturers. To Lincoya's mind
Long preparation now had made his fate
Familiar ; and he says, the thought of death
Broke not his sleep, nor mingled with his dreams,
Till Coatel was his. But then it woke ; ..
It hung, .. it prest upon him like a weight
On one who scarce can struggle with the waves ;
And when her soul was full of tenderness,
That thought recurring to her, she would rest
Her cheek on his, and weep.

The day drew nigh ;
And now the eve of sacrifice was come . . .
What will not woman, gentle woman, dare,
When strong affection stirs her spirit up ? . . .
She gathered herbs, which, like our poppy, bear
The seed of sleep, and with the temple food
Mingled their power ; herself partook the food,
So best to lull suspicion ; and the youth,
Instructed well, when all were laid asleep,
Fled far away.

II. 187

After our conquering arms

Had freed the Hoamen from their wretched yoke,

Lincoya needed but his Coatel

To fill his sum of earthly happiness.

Her to the temple had her father's vow

Awhile devoted, and some moons were still

To pass away, ere yet she might become

A sojourner with us, Lincoya's wife,

When from the Paba's wiles his watchful mind

Foreboded ill. He bade me take good heed,

And fear the sudden kindness of a foe.

I started at his words ; .. these artful men,

Hostile at heart, as well we knew they were,

These were lip-lavish of their friendship now,

And courted confidence, while our tried friend

Yuhidthiton, estranged, a seldom guest,

Sullen and joyless, seemed to bear at heart

Something that rankled there. These things were strange.

The omens, too, had ceased ; .. we heard no more

Of twilight voices, nor the unholy cloud

Steamed from the morning incense. Why was this ?

Young Malinal had from the hour of peace

Been our indweller, studious to attain

Our language and our arts. To him I told

These doubts, assured of his true love and truth ;
 For he had learnt to understand and feel
 Our only faith, had tended, like a son,
 Cynetha's drooping age, and shared with me
 His dying benediction. He, thus long
 Intent on better things, had been estranged
 From Aztlan and her councils ; but at this
 He judged it for her welfare, and for ours,
 Now to resume his rank ; . . . belike his voice
 Might yet be heard, or, if the worst befel,
 His timely warning save us from the snare.

But in their secret councils Malinal
 No longer bore a part ; the Chiefs and King
 Yielding blind reverence to the Pabas now,
 Deluded or dismayed. He sent to say
 Some treachery was designed, and bade me charge
 His brother with the crime. On that same day
 Lincoya came from Aztlan ; he had found
 Coatel labouring with a wretchedness
 She did not seek to hide ; and when the youth
 Revealed his fear, he saw her tawny cheek
 Whiten, and round his neck she clung and wept.
 She told him something dreadful was at hand,
 She knew not what : That, at the dead midnight,

Coanocotzin at Mexitli's shrine
 Had stood with all his nobles ; human blood
 Had then been offered up, and secret vows
 Vowed with mysterious horror : That but late,
 When to her father of the days to come
 She spake, and of Lincoya, and her lot
 Among the strangers, he had frowned, and strove
 Beneath dissembled anger to conceal
 Oppressive grief. She knew not what to fear,
 But something dreadful surely was at hand,
 And she was wretched.

When I heard these things,
 Yuhidthiton and the Priest Helhua
 Were in our dwellings. Them I called apart. . .
 There should be peace between us, I began ;
 Why is it otherwise ?

The Priest replied,
 Is there not peace, Cadwallon ? seek we not
 More frequent and more friendly intercourse,
 Even we, the servants of our Country-Gods,
 Whose worship ye have changed, and for whose sake
 We were, and would have been your enemies ?
 But as those Gods have otherwise ordained,
 Do we obey. Why, therefore, is this doubt ?

The Power who led us hither, I replied,
 Over the world of waters, who hath saved,
 And who will save his people, warns me now.
 Then on Yuhidthiton I fixed my eye.
 Danger is near ! I cried ; I know it near !
 It comes from Aztlan.

His disordered cheek,
 And the forced and steady boldness of his eye,
 Which in defiance met the look it feared,
 Confessed the crime. I saw his inward shame ;
 Yet with a pride like angry innocence
 Did he make answer, I am in your hands,
 And you believe me treacherous ! . . Kill me now !

Not so, Yuhidthiton ! not so ! quoth I ;
 You were the Strangers' friend, and yet again
 That wisdom may return. We are not changed ; . .
 Lovers of peace, we know, when danger comes,
 To make the evil on the guilty head
 Fall heavily and sure ! with our good arms,
 And our good cause, and that Almighty One,
 We are enough, had we no other aid,
 We of Caermadoc here, to put to shame
 Aztlan, with all her strength, and all her wiles.

II. 191

But even now is Madoc on the seas ;
He leads our brethren here ; and should he find
That Aztlan hath been false, . . oh ! hope not then,
By force or fraud, to baffle or elude
Inevitable vengeance ! While ye may,
Look to your choice ; for we are friends or foes,
Even to your own desert.

So saying, I left

The astonished men, whose unprovided minds
Failed them ; nor did they aim at answer more,
But homeward went their way. Nor knew I then, . .
For this was but a thing of yesterday, . .
How near the help I boasted. Now, I trust,
Thy coming shall discomfit all their wiles.

III.

Not yet at rest, my Sister ! quoth the Prince,
As at her dwelling door he saw the Maid
Sit gazing on that lovely moonlight scene : . .
To bed, Goervyl ! Dearest, what hast thou
To keep thee wakeful here, at this late hour,
When even I shall bid a truce to thought,
And lay me down at peace ? . . Good night, Goervyl,
Dear sister mine, . . my own dear mother's child !

She rose, and, bending on with lifted arms,
Met the fond kiss, obedient then withdrew.
Yet could not he so lightly as he weened
Lay wakeful thoughts aside ; for he foresaw
Long strife, and hard adventure to atchieve,
And forms of danger vague disturbed his dreams.

III. 193

Early at morn the colonists arose ;
Some pitch the tent-pole, and pin down the lines
That stretch the o'er-awning canvas ; to the wood
Others, with saw and axe and bill, for stakes
And undergrowth to weave the wicker walls ;
These to the ships, with whom Cadwallon sends
The Elk and Bison, broken to the yoke.

Ere noon, Erillyab and her son arrived,
To greet the Chief. She wore no longer now
The lank loose locks of careless widowhood ;
Her braided tresses round her brow were bound,
Bedecked with tufts of grey and silvery plumes
Plucked from the eagle's pennons. She, with eye
And countenance that spake no feigned delight,
Welcomed her great deliverer. But her son
Had Nature charactered so legibly,
That when his tongue told fair, his face bewrayed
The lurking falsehood ; sullen, slow of speech,
Savage, down-looking, dark, that at his words
Of welcome, Madoc in his heart conceived
Instinctive enmity.

In a happy hour
Did the Great Spirit, said Erillyab,
Give bidding to the Winds to speed thee here !

III. 194

For this I made my prayer ; and when he sent
For the Beloved Teacher, to restore him
Eyesight and youth, of him I then besought,
As he had been thy friend and ours on earth,
That he would intercede. . . Brother, we know
That the Great Spirit loves thee ; he hath blest
Thy going and thy coming, and thy friends
Have prospered for thy sake ; and now, when first
The Powers of Evil do begin to work,
Lo ! thou art here. . . Brother, we have obeyed
Thy will, and the Beloved Teacher's words
Have been our law ; but now the Evil Ones
Cry out for blood, and say they are athirst, .
And threaten vengeance. I have brought the Priest,
To whom they spake in darkness ; . . thou art wise,
And the Great Spirit will enlighten thee ; . .
We know not what to answer. . . Tell thy tale,
Neolin !

Hereat did Madoc fix upon him
A searching eye ; but he, no whit abashed,
Began with firm effrontery his speech.
The Feast of the Departed is at hand,
And I, in preparation, on the Field
Of the Spirit past the night. It came to me
In darkness, after midnight, when the moon

III. 195

Was gone, and all the stars were blotted out;
It gathered round me, with a noise of storms,
And entered into me, and I could feel
It was the Snake-God rolled and writhed within;
And I too, with the inward agony,
Rolled like a snake, and writhed. Give! give! he cried:
I thirst! . . . His voice was in me, and it burnt
Like fire, and all my flesh and bones were shaken;
Till, with a throe which seemed to rend my joints
Asunder, he past forth, and I was left
Speechless and motionless, gasping for breath.

Then Madoc, turning to Ayayaca,
Enquired, who is the man? . . . the good old Priest
Replied, he hath attended from his youth
The Snake-God's temple, and received for him
All offerings, and performed all sacrifice,
Till the Beloved Teacher made us leave
The wicked way.

Hear me! quoth Neolin,
With antic gesture and loud vehemence;
Before this generation, and before
These ancient forests, . . . yea, before yon lake
Was hollowed out, or one snow-feather fell

III. 196

On yonder mountain-top, now never bare, . . .
Before these things I was, . . . where, or from whence,
I know not, . . . who can tell? But then I was,
And in the shadow of the Spirit stood ;
And I beheld the Spirit, and in him
Saw all things, even as they were to be ;
And I held commune with him, not of words,
But thought with thought. Then was it given me
That I should chuse my station when my hour
Of mortal birth was come, . . . hunter, or chief,
Or to be mightiest in the work of war,
Or in the shadow of the Spirit live,
And he in me. According to my choice,
For ever overshadowed by his power,
I walk among mankind. At times I feel not
The burthen of his presence ; then am I
As other men ; but when the season comes,
Or if I seek the visitation, then
He fills me, and my soul is carried on,
And then do I forelive the race of men,
So that the things that will be, are to me
Past.

Amalahta lifted then his eyes .
A moment ; . . . It is true, he cried ; we know

III. 197

He is a gifted man, and wise beyond
The reach of mortal powers. Ayayaca
Hath also heard the warning.

As I slept,
Replied the aged Priest, upon the Field
Of the Spirit, a loud voice awakened me,
Crying, I thirst! Give, .. give! or I will take!
And then I heard a hiss, as if a snake
Were threatening at my side. .. But saw you nothing?
Quoth Madoc. .. Nothing; for the night was dark.
And felt you nothing? said the Ocean Prince.
He answered, Nothing; only sudden fear. ..
No inward struggle, like possession? .. None.
I thought of the Beloved Teacher's words,
And crost myself, and then he had no power.

Thou hast slept heretofore upon the Field,
Said Madoc; didst thou never witness voice,
Or ominous sound? Ayayaca replied,
Certes the Field is holy! it receives
All the year long, the operative power
Which falleth from the sky, or from below
Pervades the earth; no harvest groweth there,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor herb is left to spring:

III. 198

But there the virtue of the elements
Is gathered, till the circle of the months
Be full; then, when the Priest, by mystic rites,
Long vigils, and long abstinence prepared,
Enters, to pass the holy night alone,
The whole collected influence enters him.
Doubt not but I have felt strange impulses
On that mysterious field, and in my dreams
Been visited; and have heard sounds in the air,
I knew not what; . . . but words articulate
Never till now. It was the Wicked One!
He wanted blood.

Who says the Wicked One?
It was our Fathers' God! cried Neolin.
Son of the Ocean, why should we forsake
The worship of our fathers? Ye obey
The White-Man's Maker; but to us was given
A different skin, and speech, and land, and law.
The Snake-God understands the Red-Man's prayer,
And knows his wants, and loves him. Shame be to us,
That since the Stranger here set foot among us,
We have let his lips be dry!

Enough! replied
Madoc, who at Cadwallon's look repress
His answering anger. We will hold a talk

III. 199

Of this hereafter. Be ye sure, mean time,
That the Great Spirit will from Evil Powers
Protect his people. This, too, be ye sure,
That every deed of darkness shall be brought
To light, . . . and woe be to the lying lips !

IV.

Soon as the coming of the fleet was known,
Had Queen Erillyab sent her hunters forth.
They from the forest now arrive, with store
Of venison ; fires are built before the tents,
Where Llaian and Goervyl for their guests
Prepare the feast ; and now the ready board
With grateful odour steams. But while they sate
At meat, did Amalahta many a time
Lift his slow eye askance, and eagerly
Gaze on Goervyl's beauty ; for whate'er
In man he might have thought deformed or strange
Seemed beautiful in her, . . her golden curls,
Bright eyes of heavenly blue, and that clear skin,
Blooming with health and youth and happiness.
He, lightly yielding to the impulse, bent
His head aside, and to Erillyab spake.

IV. 201

Mother, said he, tell him to give to me
That woman for my wife, that we may be
Brethren and friends. She, in the same low tone,
Rebuked him, in her heart too well aware
How far unworthy he. Abashed thereby,
As he not yet had wholly shaken off
Habitual reverence, he sate sullenly,
Brooding in silence his imagined wiles,
By sight of beauty made more apt for ill;
For he himself being evil, good in him
Worked evil.

And now Madoc, pouring forth
The ripe metheglin, to Erillyab gave
The horn of silver brim. Taste, Queen and friend,
Said he, what from our father-land we bring,
The old beloved beverage. Sparingly
Drink, for it hath a strength to stir the brain,
And trouble reason, if intemperate lips
Abuse its potency. She took the horn,
And sipt with wary wisdom. . . Canst thou teach us
The art of this rare beverage? quoth the Queen,
Or is the gift reserved for ye alone,
By the Great Spirit, who hath favoured ye
In all things above us? . . The Chief replied,
All that we know of useful and of good

IV. 202

Ye also shall be taught, that we may be
One people.

While he spake, Erillyab past
The horn to Amalahta. Sparingly!
Madoc exclaimed; but when the savage felt
The luscious flavour, and the poignant life,
He heeded nought beyond the immediate joy.
Deep did he drink, and still with clenching hands
Struggled, when from his lips, unsatisfied,
Erillyab plucked the cup, with sharp reproof
Chiding his stubborn wilfulness. Ere long
The generous liquor flushed him: he could feel
His blood play faster, and the joyful dance
Of animal life within him. Bolder grown,
He at Goervyl lifts no longer now
The secret glance, but gloats with greedy eye;
Till, at the long and loathsome look abashed,
She rose, and nearer to her brother drew,
On light pretence of speech, being half in fear.
But he, regardless of Erillyab now,
To Madoc cried aloud, Thou art a King,
And I a King! . . . Give me thy sister there,
To be my wife, and then we will be friends,
And reign together.

Let me answer him,

IV. 203

Madoc ! Cadwallon cried. I better know
Their language, and will set aside all hope,
Yet not incense the savage. . . A great thing,
Prince Amalahta, hast thou asked ! said he ;
Nor is it in Lord Madoc's power to give
Or to withhold ; for marriage is with us
The holiest ordinance of God, whereon
The bliss or bale of human life depends.
Love must be won by love, and heart to heart
Linked in mysterious sympathy, before
We pledge the marriage vow ; and some there are,
Who hold, that, ere we enter into life,
Soul hath with soul been mated, each for each
Especially ordained. Prince Madoc's will
Avails not, therefore, where this secret bond
Hath not been framed in Heaven.

The skilful speech

Which, with wild faith and reason, thus confirmed,
Yet tempered, the denial, for a while
Silenced him, and he sate in moody dreams
Of snares and violence. Soon a drunken thirst,
And longing for the luscious beverage,
Drove those dark thoughts aside. More drink ; quoth he.
Give me the drink ! . . Madoc again repeats
His warning, and again with look and voice

IV. 204

Erillyab chides ; but he, of all restraint
Impatient, cries aloud, Am I a child ?
Give ! give ! or I will take ! .. Perchance ye think
I and my God alike cry out in vain !
But ye shall find us true !

Give him the horn !

Cadwallon answered ; there will come upon him
Folly and sleep, and then an after pain,
Which may bring wisdom with it, if he learn
Therefrom to heed our warning. .. As thou sayest,
No child art thou ! .. the choice is in thy hand ; ..
Drink, if thou wilt, and suffer, and in pain
Remember us.

He clenched the horn, and swilled
The sweet intoxication copious down.
So bad grew worse. The potent draught provoked
Fierce pride and savage insolence. Aye ! now
It seems that I have taught ye who I am !
The inebriate wretch exclaimed. This land is mine,
Not hers ; the kingdom and the power are mine !
I am the master !

Hath it made thee mad ?

Erillyab cried. .. Ask thou the Snake-God that !
Quoth he ; ask Neolin and Aztlan that !
Hear me, thou Son of the Waters ! wilt thou have me

IV. 205

For friend or foe? . . . Give me that woman there,
And store me with this blessed beverage,
And thou shalt dwell in my domains, . . . or else,
Blood, blood! the Snake-God calls for blood; the Gods
Of Aztlan and the people call for blood,
They call on me, and I will give them blood,
Till they have had their fill.

Meanwhile the Queen

In wonder and amazement heard, and grief;
Watching the fiendish workings of his face,
And turning to the Prince at times, as if
She looked to him for comfort. Give him drink,
To be at peace! quoth Madoc. The good mead
Did its good office soon; his dizzy eyes
Rolled with a sleepy swim; the joyous thrill
Died away; and, as every limb relaxed,
Down sunk his heavy head, and down he fell.
Then said the prince, We must rejoice in this,
O Queen and friend, that, evil though it be,
Evil is brought to light; he hath divulged,
In this mad mood, what else had been concealed
By guilty cunning. Set a watch upon him
And on Priest Neolin; they plot against us;
Your fall and mine alike do they conspire,
Being leagued with Aztlan to destroy us both.

IV. 206

Thy son will not remember that his lips
Have let the treason pass. Be wary, then,
And we shall catch the crafty in the pit
That they have dug for us.

Erillyab cast

A look of anger, made intense by grief,
On Amalahta. . . Cursed be the hour
Wherein I gave thee birth ! she cried ; that pain
Was light to what thy base and brutal nature
Hath sent into my soul. . . But take thou heed !
I have borne many a woe and many a loss, . .
My father's realm, the husband of my youth,
My hope in thee ! . . all motherly love is gone, . .
Sufferance well nigh worn out.

When she had ceased,

Still the deep feeling filled her, and her eye
Dwelt on him, still in thought. Brother ! she cried,
As Madoc would have soothed her, doubt not me !
Mine is no feeble heart. Abundantly
Did the Great Spirit overpay all woes,
And this the heaviest, when he sent thee here,
The friend and the deliverer. Evil tongues
May scatter lies ; bad spirits and bad men
May league against thy life ; but go thou on,
Brother ! He loves thee, and will be thy shield.

V.

This is the day, when, in a foreign grave,
King Owen's relics shall be laid to rest.
No bright emblazonries bedecked his bier,
No tapers blazed, no prelate sung the mass,
No choristers the funeral dirge intoned,
No mitred abbots, and no tonsured train,
Lengthened the pomp of ceremonious woe.
His decent bier was with white linen spread
And canopied ; two elks and bisons, yoked,
Drew on the car ; foremost Cadwallon bore
The Crucifix ; with single voice, distinct,
The good priest Llorien chaunted, loud and deep,
The solemn service ; Madoc, next the bier,
Followed his father's corpse ; bareheaded then
Came all the people, silently and slow.

The burial-place was in a grassy plat,
 A little level field of sunny green,
 Between the river and a rocky bank,
 Which, like a buttress, from the precipice
 Of naked rock sloped out. On either side
 'Twas skirted by the woodlands. A stone cross
 Stood on Cynetha's grave, sole monument,
 Beneath a single cocoa, whose straight trunk
 Rose like an obelisk, and waved on high
 Its palmy plumage, green and never sere.
 Here by Cynetha's side, with Christian prayers,
 All wrongs forgotten now, was Owen laid.
 Rest, King of Gwyneth, in a foreign grave,
 From foul indignity of Romish pride
 And bigot priesthood, from a falling land
 Thus timely snatched, and from the impending yoke!
 Rest in the kingdom of thy noble son!

Ambassadors from Aztlan in the vale
 Awaited their return, .. Yuhidthiton,
 Chief of the Chiefs, and Helhua the Priest.
 With these came Malinal. They met the Prince,
 And with a sullen stateliness returned
 His salutation, then the Chief began ;
 Lord of the Strangers, hear me ! by my voice

The People and the Pabas and the King
 Of Aztlan speak. Our injured Gods have claimed
 Their wonted worship, and made manifest
 Their wrath; we dare not impiously provoke
 The Dreadful. Worship ye in your own way;
 But we must keep the path our fathers kept.

We parted, O Yuhidthiton! as friends
 And brethren, said the Christian Prince! alas,
 That this should be our meeting! When we pledged,
 In the broad day-light, and the eye of Heaven,
 Our hands in peace, ye heard and understood
 The will of God, and felt that it was good,
 In reason and in heart. This calm assent
 Ye would bely, by midnight miracles
 Scared, and such signs of darkness, as beseem
 The demons whom ye dread! or likelier
 Duped by the craft of those accursed men,
 Whose trade is blood. Ask thou of thine own heart,
 Yuhidthiton, ..

But Helhua broke his speech, ..

Our bidding is to tell thee, quoth the Priest,
 That Aztlan hath restored, and will maintain,
 Her ancient faith. If it offendeth thee,
 Move thou thy dwelling place.

Madoc replied,

This day have I deposited in earth
My father's bones, and where his bones are laid,
There mine shall moulder.

Malinal at that

Advanced; . . Prince Madoc, said the youth, I come,
True to thy faith and thee, and to the weal
Of Aztlan true, and bearing, for that truth,
Reproach and shame and scorn and obloquy.
In sorrow come I here, a banished man;
Here take, in sorrow, my abiding place,
Cut off from all my kin, from all old ties
Divorced; all dear familiar countenances
No longer to be present to my sight;
The very mother-language which I learnt,
A lisping baby on my mother's knees,
No more with its sweet sounds to comfort me.
So be it! . . To his brother then he turned;
Yuhidthiton, said he, when thou shalt find, . .
As find thou wilt, . . that those accursed men
Have played the juggler with thee, and deceived
Thine honest heart, . . when Aztlan groans in blood, . .
Bid her remember then, that Malinal
Is in the dwellings of her enemy,
Where all his hope in banishment hath been

To intercede for her, and heal her wounds,
And mitigate her righteous punishment.

Sternly and sullenly his brother heard ;
Yet hearkened he as one whose heart perforce
Suppress its instinct, and there might be seen
A sorrow in his silent stubbornness.
And now his ministers on either hand
A water vessel fill, and heap dry sedge
And straw before his face, and fire the pile.
He, looking upward, spread his arms, and cried,
Hear me, ye Gods of Aztlan, as we were,
And are, and will be yours ! behold your foes !
He stooped, and lifted up one ample urn, . .
Thus let their blood be shed ! . . and far away
He whirled the scattering water. Then again
Raised the full vase, . . Thus let their lives be quenched !
And out he poured it on the flaming pile.
The steam-cloud, hissing from the extinguished heap,
Spread like a mist, and, ere it melted off,
Homeward the heralds of the war had turned.

VI.

The Hoamen in their Council-hall are met,
To hold the Feast of Souls ; seat above seat,
Ranged round the circling theatre they sit.
No light but from the central fire, whose smoke,
Slow passing through the opening aperture,
Excludes the day, and fills the conic roof,
And hangs above them like a cloud. Around,
The ghastly bodies of their Chiefs are hung,
Shrivelled, and parched by heat ; the humbler dead
Lie on the floor, white bones, exposed to view,
On deer, or elk-skin laid, or softer fur,
Or web, the work of many a mournful hour ;
The loathlier forms of fresh mortality,
Swathed, and in decent tenderness concealed.
Beside each body pious gifts are laid,
Mantle and belt and plumed coronal,

VI. 213

The bow he used in war, his drinking shell,
His arrows for the chace, the sarbacan,
Through whose long tube the slender shaft, breath-driven,
Might pierce the winged game. Husbands and wives,
Parents and children, there in death they lie ;
The widowed and the parent and the child
Look on in silence. Not a sound is heard
But of the crackling brand, or mouldering fire,
Or when, amid yon pendant string of shells,
The slow wind wakes a shrill and feeble sound, . .
A sound of sorrow to the mind attuned
By sights of woe.

Ayayaca at length

Came forward. . . Spirits, is it well with ye !
Is it well, Brethren ? said the aged Priest ;
Have ye received your mourning, and the rites
Of righteous grief ? or round your dwelling-place
Still do your shadows roam dissatisfied,
And to the cries of wailing woe return
A voice of lamentation ? Teach us now,
If we in aught have failed, that I, your Priest,
When I shall join ye soon, as soon I must,
May unimpeded pass the perilous floods,
And, in the Country of the Dead, be hailed
By you, with song and dance and grateful joy.

VI. 214

So saying, to the Oracle he turned,
Awaiting there the silence which implied
Peaceful assent. Against the eastern wall,
Fronting the narrow portal's winding way,
That Image stood : a cloak of fur disguised
The rude proportion of its uncouth limbs ;
The skull of some old seer of days of old
Topped it, and with a visor this was masked,
Honouring the oracular Spirit, who at times
There took his resting place. Ayayaca
Repeated, Brethren, is it well with ye ?
And raised the visor. But he started back,
Appalled and shuddering ; for a moony light
Lay in its eyeless sockets, and there came
From its immoveable and bony jaws
A long deep groan, thrice uttered, and thrice felt
In every heart of all the hearers round.
The good old Priest stood tottering, like a man
Stricken with palsy ; and he gazed with eyes
Of asking horror round, as if he looked
For counsel in that fear. But Neolin
Sprung boldly to the oracle, and cried,
Speak, Spirit ! tell us of our sin, and teach
The atonement ! A sepulchral voice replied,
Ye have for other Gods forsaken us,

VI. 215

And we abandon you ! . . and crash with that
The Image fell.

A loud and hideous shriek,
As of a demon, Neolin set up ;
So wild a yell, as, even in that hour,
Came with fresh terror to the startled ear.
While yet they sate pale and irresolute,
Helhua the Aztēca came in. He bore
A shield and arrow, tokens these of war,
Yet now beheld with hope, so great relief.
They felt his human presence.

Hoaman, hear me !

The messenger began ; Erillyab thou,
Elders and Priests and People, chiefly thou
Prince Amalahta, as of these by birth,
So now of years mature, the rightful Lord, . .
Shall it be peace or war ? . . Thus Aztlan saith ;
She, in her anger, from the land will root
The Children of the Sea ; but viewing ye
In mercy, to your former vassalage
Invites ye, and remits the tribute lives,
And for rebellion claimeth no revenge.

Oh praise your Gods ! cried Neolin, and hail
This day-spring of new hope ! Aztlan remits

The tribute lives, . . . what more could Madoc give?
 She claimeth no revenge, and, if she claimed,
 He could not save. O Hoamen, bless your Gods;
 Appease them! Thou, prince Amalahta, speak,
 And seize the mercy.

Amalahta stood

In act of speech; but then Erillyab rose . . .
 Who gives thee, boy, this Elder's privilege?
 The Queen exclaimed; . . . and thou, Priest Neolin,
 Curb thou thy traitor tongue. The reign is mine;
 I hold it from my father, he from his;
 Age before age, beyond the memory
 Of man it hath been thus. My father fell
 In battle for his people, and his sons
 Fell by his side; they perished, but their names
 Are with the names we love, . . . their happy souls
 Pursue, in fields of bliss, the shadowy deer:
 The spirit of that noble blood which ran
 From their death-wounds, is in the ruddy clouds
 Which go before the Sun, when he comes forth
 In glory. Last of that illustrious race
 Was I, Erillyab. Ye remember well,
 Elders, that day when I assembled here
 The people, and demanded at their choice
 The worthiest, to perpetuate our old line

VI. 217

Of Kings and Warriors. . . To the wind he spread
His black and blood-red banner. Even now
I hear his war-drum's tripled sound, that called
The youth to battle ; even now behold
The hope which lit his dark and fiery eye,
And kindled with a sunnier glow his cheek,
As he from yonder war-pole, in his pride,
Took the death-doers down ; . . lo here the bones
Of King Tepollomi ! my husband's bones !
There should be some among ye who beheld,
When, all with arrows quilled, and cloathed with blood,
As with a purple garment, he sustained
The unequal conflict, till the Aztecas
Took him at vantage, and their monarch's club
Let loose his struggling soul. Look, Hoaman, here !
See through how wide a wound his spirit fled !
Twenty long years of mournful widowhood
Have past away ; so long have I maintained
The little empire left us, loving well
My people, and by them as well beloved.
Say, Hoaman, am I still your Queen ?

At once,

The whole assembly rose with one acclaim, . .
Still, O Erillyab, O Beloved, rule
Thy own beloved people !

VI. 218

But the Gods !

Cried Amalahta, .. but the Oracle !
The Oracle ! quoth she ; what hath it said
That forty years of suffering had not taught
This wretched people ? .. They abandon us ?
So let them go ! Where were they at that hour,
When, like a blasting night-wind in the spring,
The multitudes of Aztlan came upon us ?
Where were they when my father went to war ?
Where were they when thy father's stiffened corpse,
Even after death a slave, held up the lamp
To light his conqueror's revels ? .. Think not, Boy,
To palter with me thus ! a fire may tremble
Within the sockets of a skull, and groans
May issue from a dead man's fleshless jaws,
And images may fall, and yet no God
Be there ! .. If it had walked abroad with life,
That had indeed been something !

Then she turned
Her voice toward the people. .. Ye have heard
This Priest of Aztlan, whose insidious tongue
Bids ye desert the Children of the Sea,
And vow again your former vassalage.
Speaks Aztlan of the former ? O my people,
I too could tell ye of the former days,

VI. 219

When yonder plain was ours, with all its woods
And waters and savannahs! . . of those days,
When, following where her husband's stronger arm
Had opened the light glebe, the willing wife
Dropt in the yellow maize; ere long to bear
Its increase to the general store, and toss
Her flowing tresses in the dance of joy.
And I could tell ye how those summer-stores
Were hoarded for the invader's winter-feasts;
And how the widows clipt those flowing locks,
To strew them, . . not upon their husbands' graves, . .
Their husbands had no graves! . . but on the rocks
And mountains in their flight. And even these rocks
And mountains could not save us! year by year
Our babes, like firstlings of the flock, were celled
To be the banquet of these Aztecas!
This very wretch, who tells us of the past,
Hath chosen them for the butchery. . . Oh, I thank you
For this brave anger! . . in your name I take
The war gift!

Gods of Aztlan! Helhua cried,
As to Erillyab's ready hand he gave
The deadly token, in your name I give
The war-gift! Ye have thirsted over-long;
Take now your fill of blood! . . He turned away;

VI. 220

And Queen Erillyab bade the tribe fulfil
Their customary rites.

Each family

Bore its own dead, and to the general grave,
With melancholy song and sob of woe,
The slow procession moves. The general grave
Was delved within a deep and shady dell,
Fronting a cavern in the rock, . . the scene
Of many a bloody rite, ere Madoc came, . .
A temple, as they deemed, by Nature made,
Where the Snake-Idol stood. On fur and cloth
Of woven grass, they lay their burthens down,
Within the ample pit ; their offerings range
Beside, and piously a portion take
Of that cold earth, to which, for ever now
Consigned, they leave their fathers, dust to dust ;
Sad relic that, and wise remembrancer.
But as with bark and resinous boughs they pile
The sepulchre, suddenly Neolin
Sprung up aloft, and shrieked, as one who treads-
Upon a viper in his heedless path.
The God ! the very God ! he cried, and howled
One long, shrill, piercing, modulated cry ;
Whereat, from that dark temple issued forth
A Serpent, huge and hideous. On he came,

VI. 221

Strait to the sound, and curled around the Priest
His mighty folds innocuous, overtopping
His human height, and, arching down his head,
Sought in the hands of Neolin for food ;
Then questing, reared and stretched and waved his neck,
And glanced his forky tongue. Who then had seen
The man, with what triumphant fearlessness,
Arms, thighs, and neck, and body, wreathed and ringed
In those tremendous folds, he stood secure,
Played with the reptile's jaws, and called for food,
Food for the present God ! . . . who then had seen
The fiendish joy which fired his countenance,
Might well have weened that he had summoned up
The dreadful monster from its native Hell,
By devilish power, himself a fiend infleshed.

Blood for the God ! he cried ; Lincoya's blood,
Friend of the Serpent's foe ! . . . Lincoya's blood !
Cried Amalahta ; and the people turned
Their eyes to seek the victim, as if each
Sought his own safety in that sacrifice.
Alone Erillyab raised her voice, confused,
But not confounded ; she alone exclaimed,
Madoc shall answer this ! unheard her voice
By the bewildered people, by the Priest

VI. 222

Unheeded ; and Lincoya sure had fallen
The victim of their terrors in that hour,
Had he been found ; but when his watchful eye
Beheld the monster from his den come forth,
He fled to bear the tidings. . . Neolin
Repeats the accursed call, Food for the God!
Ayayaca, his unbelieving Priest !
At once all eager eyes were fixed on him,
But he came forward calmly at the call.
Lo! here am I! quoth he ; and from his head
Plucking the thin grey hairs, he dealt them round...
Countrymen, kinsmen; brethren, children, take
These in remembrance of me! there will be
No other relic of your aged Priest.
From manhood to old age, full threescore years,
Have I been your true servant : fit it is
That I, who witnessed Aztlan's first assault,
Should perish her last victim ! . . and he moved
Towards the death. But then Erillyab
Seized him, and by the garment drew him back ; ..
By the Great Spirit, but he shall not die !
The Queen exclaimed ; nor shalt thou triumph thus,
Lyar and traitor ! Hoamen, to your homes !
Madoc shall answer this !

Irresolute

They heard, and inobedient ; to obey
 Fearing, yet fearing to remain. Anon,
 The Queen repeats her bidding, To your homes,
 My people ! . . . But when Neolin perceived
 The growing stir and motion of the crowd,
 As from the outward ring they moved away,
 He uttered a new cry, and disentangling
 The passive reptile's folds, rushed out among them,
 With outstretched hands, like one possessed, to seize
 His victim. Then they fled ; for who could tell
 On whom the madman, in that hellish fit,
 Might cast the lot ? An eight-years boy he seized,
 And held him by the leg, and, whirling him
 In ritual dance, till breath and sense were gone,
 Set up the death-song of the sacrifice.
 Amalahta, and what others rooted love
 Of evil leagued with him, accomplices
 In treason, joined the death-song and the dance.
 Some too there were, believing what they feared,
 Who yielded to their old idolatry,
 And mingled in the worship. Round and round-
 The accursed minister of murder whirled
 His senseless victim : they, too, round and round,
 In maddening motion, and with maddening cries,

Revolving, whirled and wheeled. At length, when now,
According to old rites, he should have dashed
On the stone Idol's head the wretch's brains,
Neolin stopt, and once again began
The long, shrill, piercing, modulated cry.
The Serpent knew the call, and, rolling on,
Wave above wave, his rising length, advanced
His open jaws ; then, with the expected prey,
Glides to the dark recesses of his den.

VII.

Meantime Erillyab's messenger had girt
His loins, and, like a roebuck, o'er the hills
He sped. He met Cadwallon and the Prince
In arms, so quickly Madoc had obeyed
Lincoya's call; at noon he heard the call,
And still the sun was riding high in heaven,
When, up the valley where the Hoamen dwelt,
He led his twenty spears. O welcome, friend
And brother! cried the Queen. Even as thou saidst,
So hath it proved; and those accursed schemes
Of treachery, which that wretched boy revealed,
Under the influence of thy potent drink,
Have ripened to effect. From what a snare
The timely warning saved me! for, besure,
What I had seen I else should have believed,
In utter fear confounded. The Great Spirit,

Who taught thee to foresee the evil thing,
Will give thee power to quell it.

On they went

Toward the dell, where now the Idolaters
Had built their dedicated fire, and still
With feast, and fits of song, and violent dance,
Pursued their rites. When Neolin perceived
The Prince approach, fearlessly he came forth,
And raised his arm, and cried, Strangers, away!
Away, profane! hence to your mother-land!
Hence to your waters! for the God is here; ..
He came for blood, and he shall have his fill!
Impious, away!

Seize him! exclaimed the Prince;

Nor had he time for motion nor for flight,
So instantly was that command obeyed.
Hoamen, said Madoc, hear me! .. I came here,
Stranger alike to Aztlan and to you;
I found ye an oppressed wretched race,
Groaning beneath your chains; at your request,
For your deliverance, I unsheathed the sword,
Redeemed ye from your bondage, and preserved
Your children from the slaughter. With those foes,
Whose burthen ye for forty years endured,
This traitor hath conspired, against yourselves,

Your Queen, and me your friend ; the solemn faith,
 Which in the face of yonder sun we pledged,
 Each to the other, this accursed man
 Hath broken, and hath stained his hands this day
 With innocent blood. Life must atone for life.
 Ere I destroy the Serpent, whom his wiles
 Have trained so well, last victim, he shall glut
 The monster's maw.

Strike, man ! quoth Neolin.

This is my consummation ! the reward
 Of my true faith ! the best that I could ask,
 The best the God could give : .. to rest in him,
 Body with body be incorporate,
 Soul into soul absorbed, and I and He
 One life, inseparable, for ever more.
 Strike ! I am weary of this mortal part ;
 Unite me to the God !

Triumphantly

He spake ; the assembled people, at his words,
 With rising awe gazed on the miscreant ;
 Madoc himself, when now he would have given
 The sign for death, in admiration paused ;
 Such power hath fortitude. And he perceived
 The auspicious moment, and set up his cry.
 Forth, from the dark recesses of the cave,

The Serpent came ; the Hoamen at the sight
 Shouted, and they who held the Priest, appalled,
 Relaxed their hold. On came the mighty Snake,
 And twined, in many a wreath, round Neolin,
 Darting aright, aleft, his sinuous neck,
 With searching eye, and lifted jaw and tongue,
 Quivering, and hiss as of a heavy shower
 Upon the summer woods. The Britons stood
 Astounded at the powerful reptile's bulk,
 And that strange sight. His girth was as of man ;
 But easily could he have overtopped
 Goliath's helmed head, or that huge King
 Of Basan, hugest of the Anakim.
 What then was human strength, if once involved
 Within those dreadful coils ? . . . The multitude
 Fell prone, and worshipped ; pale Erillyab grew,
 And turned upon the Prince a doubtful eye ;
 The Britons, too, were pale, albeit they held
 Their spears protended ; and they also looked
 On Madoc, who the while stood silently,
 Contemplating how wiseliest he might cope
 With that surpassing strength.

But Neolin,

Well hoping now success, when he had awed
 The general feeling thus, exclaimed aloud,

Blood for the God ! give him the Stranger's blood !
Avenge him on his foes ! and then, perchance,
Terror had urged them to some desperate deed,
Had Madoc pondered more, or paused in the act
One moment. From the sacrificial flames
He snatched a firebrand, and, with fire and sword,
Rushed at the monster : back the monster drew
His head, upraised recoiling, and the Prince
Smote Neolin ; all circled as he was,
And clipt in his false Deity's embrace,
Smote he the accursed Priest ; the avenging sword
Fell on his neck ; through flesh and bone it drove,
Deep in the chest : the wretched criminal
Tottered, and those huge rings a moment held
His bloody corpse upright, while Madoc struck
The Serpent : twice he struck him, and the sword
Glanced from the impenetrable scales ; nor more
Availed its thrust, though driven by that strong arm ;
For on the unyielding skin the tempered blade
Bent. He sprung upward then, and in the eyes
Of the huge monster flashed the fiery brand.
Impatient of the smoke and burning, back
The reptile wreathed, and from his loosening clasp
Dropt the dead Neolin, and turned, and fled
To his dark den.

The Hoamen, at that sight,
 Raised a loud wonder-cry, with one accord,
 Great is the Son of Ocean, and his God
 Is mightiest! But Erillyab silently
 Approached the great Deliverer; her whole frame
 Trembled with strong emotion, and she took
 His hand, and gazed a moment earnestly,
 Having no power of speech, till with a gush
 Of tears her utterance came, and she exclaimed,
 Blessed art thou, my brother! for the power
 Of God is in thee! . . . and she would have kissed
 His hand in adoration; but he cried,
 God is indeed with us, and in his name
 Will we fulfil the work! . . . then to the cave
 Advanced, and called for fire. Bring fire! quoth he;
 By his own element this spawn of hell
 Shall perish! and he entered, to explore
 The cavern depths. Cadwallon followed him,
 Bearing in either hand a flaming brand,
 For sword or spear availed not.

Far in the hill,

Cave within cave, the ample grotto pierced,
 Three chambers in the rock. Fit vestibule
 The first to that wild temple, long and low,
 Shut out the outward day. The second vault

VII. 231

Had its own daylight from a central chasm
High in the hollow ; here the Image stood,
Their rude idolatry, a sculptured snake, . .
If term of art may such mishapen form
Beseem, . . around a human figure coiled,
And all begrimmed with blood. The inmost cell,
Dark ; and far up within its blackest depth
They saw the Serpent's still small eye of fire.
Not if they thinned the forest for their pile,
Could they, with flame or suffocating smoke,
Destroy him there ; for through the open roof
The clouds would pass away. They paused not long.
Drive him beneath the chasm, Cadwallon cried,
And hem him in with fire, and from above
We crush him.

Forth they went, and climb the hill,
With all their people. Their united strength
Loosened the rocks, and ranged them round the brink,
Impending. With Cadwallon, on the height,
Ten Britons wait ; ten with the Prince descend,
And, with a firebrand each in either hand,
Enter the outer cave. Madoc advanced,
And, at the entrance of the inner den,
He took his stand alone. A bow he bore,
And arrows, round whose heads dry tow was twined ;

VII. 232

In pine-gum dipt ; he kindled these, and shot
The fiery shafts. Upon his mailed skin,
As on a rock, the bone-tipt arrows fell ;
But, at their bright and blazing light effrayed,
Out rushed the reptile. Madoc from his path
Retired against the side, and called his men,
And in they came, and circled round the Snake,
And, shaking all their flames, as with a wheel
Of fire, they ringed him in. From side to side
The monster turns ; . . . where'er he turns, the flame
Flares in his nostrils and his blinking eyes ;
For aught, against the dreaded element,
Did that brute force avail, which could have crushed
Milo's young limbs, or Theban Hercules,
Or old Manoah's mightier son, ere yet
Shorn of his strength. They press him now, and now
Give back, here urging, and here yielding way,
Till right beneath the chasm they centre him.
At once the crags are loosed, and down they fall,
Thundering. They fell like thunder, but the crash
Of scale and bone was heard. In agony
The Serpent writhed beneath the blow ; in vain,
From under the incumbent load, essayed
To drag his mangled folds. One heavier stone
Fastened and flattened him ; yet still, with tail

VII. 233

Ten cubits long, he lashed the air, and foined
 From side to side, and raised his raging head
 Above the height of man, though half his length
 Lay mutilate. Who then had felt the force
 Of that wild fury, little had to him
 Buckler or corselet profitèd, or mail,
 Or might of human arm. The Britons shrunk
 Beyond its arc of motion; but the Prince
 Took a long spear, and, springing on the stone
 Which fixed the monster down, provoked his rage.
 Uplifts the Snake his head retorted, high
 He lifts it over Madoc, then darts down
 To seize his prey. The Prince, with foot advanced,
 Inclines his body back, and points the spear,
 With sure and certain aim, then drives it up,
 Into his open jaws; two cubits deep
 It pierced, the monster forcing on the wound.
 He closed his teeth in anguish, and bit short
 The ashen hilt. But not the rage, which now
 Clangs all his scales, can from its seat dislodge
 The barbed shaft; nor those contortions wild,
 Nor those convulsive shudderings, nor the throes
 Which shake his inmost entrails, as with the air,
 In suffocating gulps, the monster now
 Inhales his own life-blood. The Prince descends;

He lifts another lance ; and now the Snake,
 Gasping, as if exhausted, on the ground
 Reclines his head one moment. Madoc seized
 That moment, planted in his eye the spear,
 Then, setting foot upon his neck, drove down,
 Through bone and brain and throat, and to the earth
 Infix'd the mortal weapon. Yet once more
 The Snake essayed to rise ; his dying strength
 Failed him, nor longer did those mighty folds
 Obey the moving impulse ; crushed and scotched,
 In every ring, through all his mangled length,
 The shrinking muscles quivered, then collapsed
 In death.

Cadwallon and his comrades now
 Enter the den ; they roll away the crag
 Which fixed him down, pluck out the mortal spear,
 Then drag him forth to day ; the force conjoined
 Of all the Britons difficultly drag
 His lifeless bulk. But when the Hoamen saw
 That form portentous trailing in its gore,
 The jaws which, in the morning, they had seen
 Purpled with human blood, now in their own
 Blackening, . . . aknee they fell before the Prince,
 And, in adoring admiration, raised
 Their hands with one accord, and all in fear

VII. 235

Worshipped the mighty Deicide. But he
Recoiling from those sinful honours, cried,
Drag out the Idol now, and heap the fire,
That all may be consumed !

Forthwith they heap'd

The sacrificial fire, and on the pile
The Serpent and the Image and the corpse
Of Neolin were laid ; with prompt supply
They feed the raging flames, hour after hour,
Till now the black and nauseous smoke is spent,
And, mingled with the ruins of the pile,
The undistinguishable ashes lay.
Go ! cried Prince Madoc, cast them in the stream,
And scatter them upon the winds, that so
No relic of this foul idolatry
Pollute the land. To-morrow meet me here,
Hoamen, and I will purify yon den
Of your abominations. Come ye here
With humble hearts ; for ye, too, in the sight
Of the Great Spirit, the Beloved One,
Must be made pure, and cleansed from your offence,
And take upon yourselves his holy law.

VIII.

How beautiful, O Sun, is thine uprise,
And on how fair a scene ! Before the Cave
The Elders of the Hoamen wait the will
Of their Deliverer ; ranged without their ring
The tribe look on, thronging the narrow vale,
And what of gradual rise the shelving combe
Displayed, or steeper eminence of wood,
Broken with crags and sunny slope of green,
And grassy platform. With the Elders sate
The Queen and Prince, their rank's prerogative,
Excluded else for sex unfit, and youth,
For counsel immature. Before the arch,
To that rude fane rude portal, stands the Cross,
By Madoc's hand victorious planted there.
And lo, Prince Madoc comes ! no longer mailed

VIII. 237

In arms of mortal might ; the spear and sword,
 The hauberk and the helmet laid aside,
 Gorget and gauntlet, grieves and shield ; he comes
 In peaceful tunic clad, and mantle long ;
 His hyacinthine locks now shadowing
 That face, which late, with iron overbrowed,
 Struck from within the aventayle such awe
 And terror to the heart. Bareheaded he,
 Following the servant of the altar, leads
 The reverential train. Before them, raised
 On high, the sacred Images are borne.
 There, in faint semblance, holiest Mary bends
 In virgin beauty o'er her blessed babe, . .
 A sight, that almost to Idolatry
 Might win the soul by love. But who can gaze
 Upon that other form, which on the rood
 In agony is stretched ? . . his hands transfixed,
 And lacerate with the body's pendent weight ;
 The black and deadly paleness of his face,
 Streaked with the blood which from that crown of scorn
 Hath ceased to flow ; the side wound streaming still ;
 And open still those eyes, from which the look
 Not yet hath past away, that went to Heaven,
 When, in that hour, the Son of Man exclaimed,
 Forgive them, for they know not what they do !

VIII. 238

And now arrived before the cave, the train
Halt : to the assembled elders, where they sate,
Ranged in half circle, Madoc then advanced,
And raised, as if in act to speak, his hand.
Thereat was every human sound suppressed ;
And every quickened ear and eager eye
Centered to wait his words.

The Prince began, . . .

Hoamen, friends, brethren, . . . friends we have been long,
And brethren shall be, ere the day go down, . . .
I come not here propounding doubtful things,
For counsel, and deliberate resolve
Of searching thought ; but with authority
From Heaven, to give the law, and to enforce
Obedience. Ye shall worship God alone,
The One Eternal. That Beloved One
Ye shall not serve with offered fruits, or smoke
Of sacrificial fire, or blood, or life ;
Far other sacrifice he claims, . . . a soul
Resigned, a will subdued, a heart made clean
From all offence. Not for your lots on earth,
Menial or mighty, slave or highly-born,
For cunning in the chase, or strength in war,
Shall ye be judged hereafter ; . . . as ye keep
The law of love, as ye shall tame your wrath,

VIII. 239

Forego revenge, forgive your enemies,
Do good to them that wrong ye, ye will find
Your bliss or bale. This law came down from Heaven.
Lo, ye behold Him there by whom it came ;
The Spirit was in Him, and for the sins
Of man he suffered thus, and by his death
Must all mankind be blest. Not knowing Him,
Ye wandered on in error ; knowing now,
And not obeying, what was error once
Is guilt and wilful wrong: If ever more
Ye bow to your false Deities the knee ;
If ever more ye worship them with feast,
Or sacrifice, or dance ; whoso offends
Shall from among the people be cut off,
Like a corrupted member, lest he taint
The whole with death. With what appointed rites
Your homage must be paid, ye shall be taught ;
Your children, in the way that they shall go,
Trained from their childhood up. Make ye, meantime,
Your prayer to that Beloved One, who sees
The secrets of all hearts ; and set ye up
This, the memorial of his chosen Son,
And her, who, blessed among women, fed
The Appointed at her breast, and by his cross
Endured intenser anguish ; therefore sharing

VIII. 240

His glory now, with sunbeams robed, the Moon
Her footstool, and a wreath of stars her crown.

Hoamen, ye deem us children of a race
Mightier than ye, and wiser, and by Heaven
Beloved and favoured more. From this pure law
Hath all proceeded, .. wisdom, power, whate'er
Here elevates the soul, and makes it ripe
For higher powers, and more exalted bliss.
Share then our law, and be with us, on earth,
Partakers of these blessings, and, in Heaven,
Co-heritors with us of endless joy.

Ere yet one breath or motion had disturbed
The reverential hush, Erillyab rose.
My people, said the Queen, their God is best
And mightiest. Him, to whom we offered up
Blood of our blood, and of our flesh the flesh,
Vainly we deemed divine ; no spirit he
Of good or evil, by the conquering arm
Of Madoc mortal proved. What then remains
But that the blessing, proffered thus in love,
In love we take ? .. Deliverer, Teacher, Friend,
First in the fellowship of faith, I claim
The initiatory rite.

VIII. 241

I also, cried

The venerable Priest Ayayaca,
Old as I am, I also, like a child,
Would learn this wisdom, yet before I die.
The Elders rose and answered, We and all!
And from the congregated tribe burst forth
One universal shout, .. Great is the God
Of Madoc, .. worthy to be served is he!

Then to the mountain-rivulet, which rolled
Like amber over its dark bed of rock,
Did Madoc lead Erillyab, in the name
Of Jesus, to his Christian family
Accepted now. On her and on her son,
The Elders and the People, Llorien
Sprinkles the sanctifying waters. Day
Was scarcely two hours old when he began
His work, and when he ceased, the sun had past
The heights of noon. Ye saw that blessed work,
Sons of the Cymry, Cadog, Deiniol,
Padarn and Teilo! ye whose sainted names
Your monumental temples still record;
Thou, David, still revered, who in the vale,
Where, by old Hatteril's wintry torrents swoln,
Rude Hodney rolls his raging stream, didst chuse

VIII. 242

Thy hermit home ; and ye who by the sword
Of the fierce Saxon, when the bloodier Monk
Urged on the work of murder, for your faith
And freedom fell, . . . Martyrs and Saints, ye saw
This triumph of the Cymry and the Cross,
And struck your golden harps to hymns of joy.

IX.

As now the rites were ended, Caradoc
Came from the ships, leading an Azteca
Guarded and bound. Prince Madoc, said the Bard,
Lo! the first captive of our arms I bring.
Alone, beside the river I had strayed,
When, from his lurking place, the savage hurled
A javelin. At the rustle of the reeds,
From whence the blow was aimed, I turned in time,
And heard it whizz beside me. Well it was,
That from the ships they saw and succoured me ;
For, supple as a serpent in my grasp,
He seemed all joint and flexure ; nor had I
Armour to ward, nor weapon to offend,
To battle all unused and unprepared ;
But I too, here, upon this barbarous land,

IX. 244

Like Elmur and like Aronan of old,
Must lift the ruddy spear.

This is no day

For vengeance, answered Madoc, else his deed
Had met no mercy. Freely let him go!
Perchance the tidings of our triumph here
May yet reclaim his country. . . Azteca,
Go, let your Pabas know that we have crushed
Their complots here ; beneath our righteous sword
The Priest and his false Deity have fallen,
The Idols been consumed, and in their stead
The emblems of our holy faith set up,
Whereof the Hoamen have this day been made
Partakers. Say to Aztlan, when she too
Will make her temples clean, and put away
Her foul abominations, and accept
The Christian Cross, that Madoc then accords
Forgiveness for the past, and peace to come.
This better part let her, of her free will
And wisdom, chuse in time.

Till Madoc spake,

The captive reckless of his peril stood,
Gazing with resolute and careless eye,
As one in whom the lot of life or death
Moved neither fear nor feeling ; but that eye

IX. 245

Now glowing with defiance, . . . Seek ye peace?
He cried : O weak and woman-hearted man !
Already wouldst thou lay the sword to rest? . . .
Not with the burial of the sword this strife
Must end, but of the warrior. Never thrives
The Tree of Peace, till planted by the brave
Upon his enemy's grave ! . . . Peace-loving fools,
Fly hence! for Aztlan suffers on her soil
No living stranger.

Do thy bidding, Chief!

Calmly Cadwallon answered. To her choice
Let Aztlan look, lest what she now reject
In insolence of strength, she take upon her,
In sorrow and in suffering and in shame,
By strong compulsion, penitent too late.
Thou hast beheld our ships with gallant men
Freighted, a numerous force, . . . and for our arms, . . .
Surely thy nation hath acquired of them
Disastrous knowledge.

Curse upon your arms!

Exclaimed the Savage : . . . Is there one among you
Dare lay that cowardly advantage by,
And meet me, man to man, in honest strife?
That I might grapple with him, weaponless,
On yonder rock, breast against breast, fair force

IX. 246

Of limb and breath and blood, . . . till one, or both,
Dashed down the shattering precipice, should feed
The mountain eagle! . . . Give me, I beseech you,
That joy!

As wisely, said Cynetha's son,
Thy foe might challenge thee, and bid thee let
Thy strong right hand hang idle in the fray;
That so his weakness with thy strength might cope
In equal battle! . . . Not in wrongful war,
The tyrants of our weaker brethren,
Wield we these dreadful arms, . . . but when assailed
By fraud and force, when called upon to aid
The feeble and oppressed, shall we not
Then put our terrors forth, and thunder-strike
The guilty?

Silently the savage heard;
Joy brightened in his eyes, as they unloosed
His bonds! he stretched his arms at length, to feel
His liberty, and, like a greyhound then
Slipt from the leash, he bounded o'er the hills.
What was from early morning till noon day
The steady travel of a well-girt man,
He, with fleet feet and unfatiguable,
In three short hours hath traversed; in the lake
He dashed, now shooting forth his pointed arms,

Arrow-like darting on ; recumbent now,
 Forces, with springing feet, his easier way ;
 Then with new speed, as freshened by repose,
 Again he breasts the waters. On the shore
 Of Aztlan now he stands, and breathes at will,
 And wrings his dripping locks ; then through the gate
 Pursued his way.

Green garlands deck the gate ;
 Gay are the temples with green boughs affixed ;
 The door-posts and the lintels hung with wreaths ;
 The fire of sacrifice, with flames bedimmed,
 Burns, in the sunlight, pale ; the victims wait
 Around, impatient of their death delayed.
 The Priest, before Tezcalipoca's shrine,
 Watches the maize-strewn threshold, to announce
 The footsteps of the God ; for this the day,
 When to his favoured city he vouchsafes
 His annual presence, and, with unseen feet,
 Imprints the maize-strewn threshold ; followed soon
 By all whose altars with eternal fires
 Aztlan illumed, and fed with human blood ; ..
 Mexitli, woman-born, who from the womb,
 Child of no mortal sire, leapt terrible,
 The armed avenger of his mother's fame ;
 And he whose will the subject Winds obey,

Quetzalcoal, and Tlaloc, Water-God,
 And all the host of Deities, whose power
 Requites with bounty Aztlan's pious zeal,
 Health and rich increase giving to her sons,
 And withering in the war her enemies.
 So taught the Priests, and therefore were the gates
 Green-garlanded, the temples green with boughs,
 The door-posts and the lintels hung with wreaths ;
 And yonder victims, ranged around the fire,
 Are destined, with the steam of sacrifice,
 To greet their cursed coming.

With the train

Of warrior Chiefs Coanocotzin stood,
 That when the Priest proclaimed the entered God,
 His lips before the present Deity
 Might pour effectual prayer. The assembled Chiefs
 Saw Tlalala approach, more welcome now,
 As one whose absence from the appointed rites
 Had wakened fear and wonder. . . Think not ye,
 The youth exclaimed, careless impiety
 Could this day lead me wandering. I went forth
 To dip my javelin in the Strangers' blood, . .
 A sacrifice, methought, our Gods had loved
 To scent, and sooner hastened to enjoy.
 I failed, and fell a prisoner ; but their fear

Released me, . . . coward fear, or idiot hope,
 That, like Yuhidthiton, I might become
 Their friend, and merit chastisement from Heaven,
 Pleading the Strangers' cause. They bade me go
 And proffer peace. . . Chiefs, were it possible
 That tongue of mine could win you to that sham
 Up would I pluck the member, though my soul
 Followed its bloody roots. The Stranger finds
 No peace in Aztlan, but the peace of death !

'Tis bravely said ! Yuhidthiton replied,
 And fairly mayest thou boast, young Tlalala,
 For thou art brave in battle. Yet 'twere well
 If that same fearless tongue were taught to check
 Its boyish licence now. No law forbade
 Our friendship with the Stranger, when my voice
 Pled for proffered peace ; that fault I shared
 In common with the King, and with the Chiefs,
 The Pabas and the People, none foreseeing
 Danger or guilt : but when at length the Gods
 Made evident their wrath in prodigies,
 I yielded to their manifested will
 My prompt obedience. . . Bravely hast thou said,
 And brave thou art, young Tyger of the War !
 But thou hast dealt with other enemies

IX. 250

Than these impenetrable men, . . with foes,
Whose conquered Gods lie idle in their chains,
And with tame weakness brook captivity.
When thou hast met the strangers in the fight,
And in the doings of that fight outdone
Yuhidthiton, revile him then for one
Slow to defend his country and his faith :
Till then, with reverence, as beseems thy youth,
Respect thou his full fame !

I wrong it not !

I wrong it not, cried the young Azteca ;
But truly, as I hope to equal it,
Honour thy well-earned glory. . . But this peace ! . .
Renounce it ! . . say that it shall never be ! . .
Never, . . as long as there are Gods in Heaven,
Or men in Aztlan !

That, the King replied,
The Gods themselves have answered. Never yet
By holier ardour were our countrymen
Possessed : peace-offerings of repentance fill
The temple courts ; from every voice ascends
The contrite prayer ; daily the victim's heart
Sends its propitiatory steam to Heaven ;
And if the aid divine may be procured
By the most dread solemnities of faith,

IX. 251

And rigour of severest penitence,
Soon shall the present influence strengthen us,
And Aztlan be triumphant.

While they spake,
The ceaseless sound of song and instrument
Rung through the air, now rising like the voice
Of angry ocean, now subsiding soft,
As when the breeze of evening dies away.
The horn, and shrill-toned pipe, and drum, that gave
Its music to the hand, and hollowed wood,
Drum-like, whose thunders, ever and anon,
Commingling with the sea-shell's spiral roar,
Closed the full harmony. And now the eve
Past on, and, through the twilight visible,
The frequent fire-flies' brightening beauties shone.
Anxious and often now the Priest surveyed
The maize-strewn threshold; for the wonted hour
Was come, and yet no footstep of the God!
More radiant now the fire of sacrifice,
Fed to full fury, blazed, and its red smoke
Imparted to the darker atmosphere
Such obscure light, as, o'er Vesuvio seen,
Or pillared upon Etna's mountain head,
Makes darkness dreadful. In the captives' cheeks
Then might a livid paleness have been seen,

And wilder terror in their ghastly eyes,
Expecting momentarily the pang of death.
Soon in the multitude a doubt arose,
Which none durst mention, lest his neighbour's fears,
Divulged, should strengthen his: . . . the hour was past,
And yet no foot had marked the sprinkled maize.

X

Now every moment gave their doubts new force,
And each alarmed eye disclosed the fear
Which trembled on the tongue, when to the King,
Emaciate like some bare anatomy,
And deadly pale, Tezozomoc was led,
By two supporting Priests. Ten painful months,
Immured amid the forest, had he dwelt,
In abstinence and solitary prayer
Passing his nights and days : thus did the Gods
From their High Priest exact, when they enforced,
By danger or distress, the penance due
For public sins ; and he had dwelt ten months,
Praying and fasting and in solitude,
Till now might every bone of his lean limbs
Be told, and in his starved and bony face
The living eye appeared unnatural, ..
A ghostly sight.

In breathless eagerness
 The multitude drew round as he began, ..
 O King, the Gods of Aztlan are not come ;
 They will not come before the Strangers' blood
 Smoke on their altars : but they have beheld
 My days of prayer, and nights of watchfulness,
 And fasts austere, and bloody disciplines,
 And have revealed their pleasure. Who is here,
 Who to the White King's dwelling place dare go,
 And execute their will?

Scarce had he said,
 When Tlalala exclaimed, I am the man.

Hear then! Tezozomoc replied. .. Ye know
 That self-denial and long penance purge
 The film and foulness of mortality,
 For more immediate intercourse with Heaven
 Preparing the pure spirit; and all eyes
 May witness that with no relaxing zeal
 I have performed my duty. Much I feared
 For Aztlan's sins, and oft, in bitterness,
 Have groaned and bled for her iniquity ;
 But chiefly for this solemn day the fear
 Was strong upon me, lest her Deities,
 Estranged, should turn away, and we be left

A spiritless and God-abandoned race,
A warning to the earth. Ten weary months
Have the raw maize and running water been
My only food; but not a grain of maize
Hath stayed the gnawing appetite, nor drop
Of water cooled my parched and painful tongue,
Since yester morn arose. Fasting I prayed,
And, praying, gashed myself; and all night long,
I watched and wept and supplicated Heaven,
Till the weak flesh, its life-blood almost drained,
Sunk with the long austerity: a dread
Of death came over me; a deathly chill
Ran through my veins, and loosened every limb;
Dim grew my eyes; and I could feel my heart
Dying away within me, intermit
Its slow and feeble throbs, then suddenly
Start, as it seemed exerting all its force
In one last effort. On the ground I fell,
I know not if entranced, or dead indeed,
But without motion, hearing, sight, or sense,
Feeling, or breath, or life. From that strange state,
Even in such blessed freedom from all pain,
That sure I thought myself in very Heaven,
I woke, and raised my eyelids, and beheld

A light, which seemed to penetrate my bones
 With life and health. Before me, visible,
 Stood Coatlantona ; a wreath of flowers
 Circled her hair, and from their odorous leaves
 Arose a lambent flame ; not fitfully,
 Nor with faint flash or spark of earthly flowers ;
 From these, for ever flowing forth, there played,
 In one perpetual dance of pointed light,
 The azure radiance of innocuous fire.
 She spake. . . Hear, Aztlan ! and give ear, O King !
 She said, Not yet the offended Gods relax
 Their anger ; they require the Strangers' blood,
 The foretaste of their banquet. Let their will
 Be known to Aztlan, and the brave perform
 Their bidding ; I, meantime, will seek to soothe,
 With all a mother's power, Mexitli's wrath.
 So let the Maidens daily with fresh flowers
 Garland my temple ! . . . Daily with fresh flowers
 Garland her temple, Aztlan ! and revere
 The gentle mother of thy guardian God !

And let the brave, exclaimed young Tlalala,
 Perform her bidding ! Servant of the Gods,
 Declare their will ! . . . Is it, that I should seek
 The Strangers, in the first who meets my way

To plunge the holy weapon? Say thou to me,
 Do this! . . . and I depart to do the deed,
 'Though my life-blood should mingle with the foe's.

O brave young Chief! Tezozomoc replied,
 With better fortune may the grateful Gods
 Reward thy valour! deed so hazardous
 They ask not. Couldst thou from the mountain holds
 Tempt one of these accursed to pursue
 Thy artful flight, an ambushed band might rise
 Upon the unsuspecting enemy,
 And intercept return; then hitherward
 The captive should be led, and Aztlan's Gods
 On their own altars see the sacrifice,
 Well pleased, and Aztlan's sons, inspirited,
 Behold the omen of assured success.
 Thou knowest that Tlaloc's annual festival
 Is close at hand. A Stranger's child would prove
 A victim, whose rare value would deserve
 His certain favour. More I need not say.
 Chuse thou the force for ambush; and thyself
 Alone, or with a chosen comrade, seek
 The mountain dwellers.

Instant as he ceased,
 Ocelopan exclaimed, I go with thee,

O Tlalala! My friend! if one alone
 Could have the honour of this enterprize,
 My love might yield it thee; . . . but thou wilt need
 A comrade. . . Tlalala, I go with thee!

The Chief replied, Whom should my heart select,
 Its tried companion else, but thee, so oft
 My brother in the battle? We will go,
 Shedder of blood! together will we go,
 Now, ere the midnight!

Nay! the Priest exclaimed,
 A little while delay; and, ere ye go,
 Devote yourselves to Heaven! Feebly he spake,
 Like one exhausted; gathering then new force,
 As with laborious effort, he pursued, . . .
 Bedew Mexitli's altar with your blood,
 And go beneath his guidance. I have yet
 Strength to officiate, and to bless your zeal.
 So saying, to the Temple of the God
 He led the way. The warriors followed him;
 And, with his chiefs, Coanocotzin went,
 To grace with all solemnity the rite.
 They pass the Wall of Serpents, and ascend
 The massive fabric; four times they surround
 Its ample square, the fifth, they reach the height.

There, on the level top, two temple-towers.
Were reared; the one Tezcalipoca's fane,
Supreme of Heaven, where now the wily Priest
Stood, watchful for his presence, and observed
The maize-strewn threshold. His the other pile,
By whose peculiar power and patronage
Aztlan was blest, Mexitli, woman-born.
Before the entrance, the eternal fire
Was burning; bare of foot they entered there,

On a blue throne, which four huge silver snakes,
As if the keepers of the sanctuary,
Circled, with stretching neck and fangs displayed,
Mexitli state; another graven snake
Belted with scales of gold his monster bulk.
Around the neck a loathsome collar hung,
Of human hearts; the face was masked with gold;
His specular eyes seemed fire; one hand upreared
A club, the other, as in battle, held
The shield; and over all, suspended, hung
The banner of the nation. They beheld
In awe, and knelt before the Terrible God.

Guardian of Aztlan! cried Tezozomoc,
Who to thy mortal mother has assigned

X. 260

The kingdom o'er all trees and arborets
And herbs and flowers, giving her endless life,
A Deity among the Deities,
While Coatlantona implores thy love
To thine own people, they in fear approach
Thy awful fane, who know no fear beside,
And offer up the worthiest sacrifice,
The blood of heroes!

To the ready Chiefs

He turned, and said, Now stretch your arms, and make
The offering to the God. They their bare arms
Stretched forth, and stabbed them with the aloe-point.
Then, in a golden vase, Tezozomoc
Received the mingled streams, and held it up
Toward the giant Idol, and exclaimed,
Terrible God! Protector of our realm!
Receive thine incense! Let the steam of blood
Ascend to thee, delightful! So mayest thou
Still to thy chosen people lend thine aid,
And these blaspheming strangers from the earth
Be swept away, as erst the monster race
Of Mammuth, Heaven's fierce ministers of wrath,
Who drained the lakes in thirst, and for their food
Exterminated nations. And as when,
Their dreadful ministry of death fulfilled,

X. 261

I palnemoani, by whom we live,
Bade thee go forth, and with thy lightnings fill
The vault of Heaven, and with thy thunders rock
The rooted earth, till of the monster race
Only their monumental bones remained, . .
So arm thy favoured people with thy might,
Terrible God! and purify the land
From these blaspheming foes!

He said, and gave
Ocelopan the vase. . . Chiefs, ye have poured
Your strength and courage to the Terrible God,
Devoted to his service; take ye now
The beverage he hath hallowed. In your youth
Ye have quaffed manly blood, that manly thoughts
Might ripen in your hearts; so now with this,
Which, mingling, from such noble veins hath flowed,
Increase of valour drink, and added force.
Ocelopan received the bloody vase,
And drank, and gave in silence to his friend
The consecrated draught; then Tlalala
Drained off the offering. Braver blood than this
My lips can never taste! quoth he; but soon
Grant me, Mexitli, a more grateful cup, . .
The stranger's life!

Are all the rites performed?

Ocelopan enquired. Yea, all is done,
 Answered the Priest. Go! and the guardian God
 Of Aztlan be your guide!

They left the fane.

Lo! as Tezozomoc was passing by
 The eternal fire, the eternal fire shot up
 A long blue flame. He started; he exclaimed,
 The God! the God! Tezcalipoca's Priest
 Echoed the welcome cry, The God! the God!
 For lo! his footsteps mark the maize-strewn floor!
 A mighty shout from all the multitude
 Of Aztlan rose; they cast into the fire
 The victims, whose last shrieks of agony
 Mingled unheeded with the cries of joy.
 Then louder from the spiral sea-shell's depth
 Swelled the full roar, and from the hollow wood
 Pealed deeper thunders; round the choral band,
 The circling nobles, gay with gorgeous plumes,
 And gems which sparkled to the midnight fire,
 Moved in the solemn dance; each in his hand,
 In measured movements, lifts the feathery shield,
 And shakes a rattling ball to measured sounds.
 With quicker step, the inferior chiefs without,
 Equal in number, but in just array,
 The spreading radii of the mystic wheel,

Revolve ; and, outermost, the youths roll round,
In motions rapid as their quickened blood.
So thus, with song and harmony, the night
Past on in Aztlan, and all hearts rejoiced.

XI.

Meantime from Aztlan, on their enterprize,
Shedder of Blood, and Tyger of the War,
Ocelopan and Tlalala set forth.
With chosen followers, through the silent night,
Silent they travelled on. After a way
Circuitous, and far through lonely tracks,
They reached the mountains, and amid the shade
Of thickets covering the uncultured slope,
Their patient ambush placed. The Chiefs alone
Held on, till winding in ascent they reached
The heights which o'er the Britons' mountain hold
Impended; there they stood, and by the moon,
Who yet, with undiminished lustre, shone
High in the dark-blue firmament, from thence
Explored the steep descent. Precipitous
The rock beneath them lay, a sudden cliff,

XI. 265

Bare and unbroken ; in its midway holes,
Where never hand could reach, nor eye intrude,
The eagle built her eyrie. Farther on,
Its interrupted crags and ancient woods
Offered a difficult way. From crag to crag,
By rocky shelf, by trunk, or root, or bough,
A painful toil and perilous, they past.
And now, stretched out amid the matted shrubs,
Which, at the entrance of the valley, clothed
The rugged bank, they crouched.

By this the stars
Grew dim; the glow-worm hath put out her lamp ;
The owls have ceased their night-song. On the top
Of yon magnolia the loud turkey's voice
Is heralding the dawn ; from tree to tree
Extends the wakening watch-note, far and wide,
Till the whole woodlands echo with the cry.
Now breaks the morning ; but as yet no foot
Hath marked the dews, nor sound of man is heard.
Then first Ocelopan beheld, where near,
Beneath the shelter of a half-roofed hut,
A sleeping stranger lay. He pointed him
To Tlalala. The Tyger looked around :
None else was nigh. . . Shall I descend, he said,
And strike him ? here is none to see the deed.

XI. 266

We offered to the Gods our mingled blood
Last night; and now, I deem it, they present
An offering which shall more propitiate them,
And omen sure success. I will go down
And kill!

He said, and, gliding like a snake,
Where Caradoc lay sleeping made his way.
Sweetly slept he, and pleasant were his dreams
Of Britain and the blue-eyed Maid he loved.
The Azteca stood over him; he knew
His victim, and the power of vengeance gave
Malignant joy. Once hast thou 'scaped my arm;
But what shall save thee now? the Tyger thought,
Exulting; and he raised his spear to strike.
That instant, o'er the Briton's unseen harp
The gale of morning past, and swept its strings
Into so sweet a harmony, that sure
It seemed no earthly tone. The savage man
Suspends his stroke; he looks astonished round;
No human hand is near; .. and hark! again
The aerial music swells and dies away.
Then first the heart of Tlalala felt fear.
He thought that some protecting spirit lived
Beside the stranger, and, abashed, withdrew.

XI. 267

A God protects him! to Ocelopan,
Whispering, he said. Didst thou not hear the sound
Which entered into me, and fixed my arm
Powerless above him?

Was it not a voice
From thine own Gods, to strengthen thee, replied
His sterner comrade, and make evident
Their pleasure in the deed?

Nay! Tlalala

Rejoined; they speak in darkness and in storms.
The thunder is their voice, that peals through Heaven,
Or, rolling underneath us, makes earth rock
In tempest, and destroys the sons of men.
It was no sound of theirs, Ocelopan!
No voice to hearten, .. for I felt it pass,
Unmanning every limb; .. yea, it relaxed
The sinews of my soul. Shedder of Blood,
I cannot lift my hand against the man.
Go, if thy heart be stronger!

But mean time

Young Caradoc arose, of his escape
Unconscious; and by this the stirring sounds
Of day began, increasing now, as all
Now to their toil betake them. Some go fell
The stately wood; some from the tree low-laid

Hew the huge boughs ; here round the fire they char
 The stake-points ; here they level with a line
 The ground-plot, and infix the ready piles,
 Or, interknitting them with osiers, weave
 The wicker wall ; others along the lake,
 From its shoal-waters, gather reeds and canes, ..
 Light roofing, suited to the genial sky.
 The woodman's measured stroke, the regular saw,
 The wain slow-creaking, and the voice of man
 Answering his fellow, or, in single toil,
 Chearing his labour with a chearful song,
 Strange concert made to those fierce Aztecas,
 Who, beast-like, in their silent lurking place
 Couched close and still, observant for their prey.

All overseeing, and directing all,
 From place to place moved Madoc, and beheld
 The dwellings rise. Young Hoel at his side
 Ran on, best pleased when at his Uncle's side
 Courting indulgent love. And now they came
 Beside the half-roofed hut of Caradoc ;
 Of all the mountain-dwellings that the last.
 The little boy, in boyish wantonness,
 Would quit his Uncle's hold, and haste away,
 With childhood's frolic speed, then laugh aloud,

XI. 269

To tempt pursuit, now running to the huts,
Now toward the entrance of the valley straits.
But wheresoe'er he turned, Ocelopan
With hunter-eye pursued his heedless course,
In breath-suspending vigilance. Ah me!
The little wretch toward his lurking place
Draws near, and calls on Madoc; and the Prince
Thinks of no danger nigh, and follows not
The childish lure! nearer the covert now
Young Hoel runs, and stops, and calls again;
Then, like a lion, from his couching place
Ocelopan leapt forth, and seized his prey-

Loud shrieked the affrighted child, as in his arms
The savage graspt him; startled at the cry,
Madoc beheld him hastening through the pass.
Quick as instinctive love can urge his feet
He follows, and he now almost has reached
The incumbered ravisher, and hope inspires
New speed, . . . yet nearer now, and nearer still, . . .
And lo! the child holds out his little arms!
That instant, as the Prince almost had laid
His hand upon the boy, young Tlalala
Leapt on his neck, and soon, though Madoc's strength,
With frantic fury, shook him from his hold,

XI. 270

Far down the steep Ocelopan had fled.
Ah! what avails it now, that they, by whom
Madoc was standing to survey their toil,
Have missed their chief, and spread the quick alarm?
What now avails it, that, with distant aid,
His gallant men come down? Regarding nought
But Hoel, but the wretched Llaian's grief,
He rushes on; and ever as he draws
Near to the child, the Tyger Tlalala
Impedes his way; and now they reach the place
Of ambush, and the ambushed band arise,
And Madoc is their prisoner.

Caradoc,

In vain thou leadest on the late pursuit!
In vain, Cadwallon, thy alarmed love
Caught the first sound of evil! They pour out,
Tumultuous, from the vale, a half-armed troop;
Each with such weapons as his hasty hand
Can seize, they rush to battle. Gallant men,
Your valour boots not! It avails not now,
With such fierce onset that ye charge the foe,
And drive with such full force the weapon home!
They, while ye slaughter them, impede pursuit,
And far away, mean time, their comrades bear
The prisoner Prince. In vain his noble heart

XI. 271

Swells now with wild and suffocating rage ;
In vain he struggles : . . they have bound his limbs
With the tough osier, and his struggles now
But bind more close and cuttingly the band.
They hasten on ; and, while they bear the prize,
Leaving' their ill-doomed fellows in the fight
To check pursuit, foremost afar of all,
With unabating strength by joy inspired,
Ocelopan to Aztlan bears the child.

XII.

Good tidings travel fast. . . The chief is seen;
He hastens on; he holds the child on high;
He shouts aloud. Through Aztlan spreads the news;
Each to his neighbour tells the happy tale, . .
Joy, . . joy to Aztlan! the Blood-shedder comes!
Tlaloc hath given his victim.

 Ah, poor child!

They from the gate swarm out to welcome thee,
Warriors, and men grown grey, and youths and maids;
Exulting, forth they crowd. The mothers throng
To view thee, and while, thinking of thy doom,
They clasp their own dear infants to the breast
With deeper love, delighted think that thou
Shalt suffer for them. He, poor child, admires
The strange array; with wonder he beholds
Their olive limbs, half bare, their plummy crowns,

XII. 273

And gazes round and round, where all was new,
Forgetful of his fears. But when the Priest
Approached to take him from the Warrior's arms,
Then Hoel screamed, and from that hideous man
Averting, to Ocelopan he turned;
And would have clung to him, so dreadful late,
Stern as he was, and terrible of eye;
Less dreadful than the Priest, whose dark aspect,
Which Nature with her harshest characters
Had featured, art made worse. His cowl was white ;
His untrimmed hair, a long and loathsome mass,
With cotton cords intwisted, clung with gum,
And matted with the blood, which, every morn,
He from his temples drew before the God;
In sacrifice : bare were his arms, and smeared
Black : but his countenance a stronger dread
Than all the horrors of that outward garb,
Struck with quick instinct to young Hoel's heart ;
It was a face, whose settled sullenness
No gentle feeling ever had disturbed ;
Which, when he probed a victim's living breast,
Retained its hard composure.

Such was he
Who took the son of Llaian, heeding not
His cries and screams, and arms, in suppliant guise,

Stretched out to all around, and strugglings vain.
 He to the Temple of the Water God
 Conveyed his victim. By the threshold, there
 The ministering Virgins stood, a comely band
 Of high-born damsels, to the temple rites
 By pious parents vowed. Gladly to them
 The little Hoel leapt; their gentle looks
 No fear excited; and he gazed around,
 Pleased and surprised, unconscious to what end
 These things were tending. O'er the rush-strewn floor
 They, to the azure Idol, led the child,
 Now not reluctant, and they raised the hymn.

God of the Waters! at whose will the streams
 Flow in their wonted channels, and diffuse
 Their plenty round, the blood and life of earth;
 At whose command they swell, and o'er their banks
 Burst with resistless ruin, making vain
 The toils and hopes of man, . . . behold this child!
 O, strong to bless, and mighty to destroy,
 Tlaloc! behold thy victim! so mayest thou
 Restrain the peaceful streams within their banks,
 And bless the labours of the husbandman.

God of the Mountains! at whose will the clouds

XII. 275

Cluster around the heights ; who sendest them
To shed their fertilizing showers, and raise
The drooping herb, and o'er the thirsty vale
Spread their green freshness ; at whose voice the hills
Grow black with storms ; whose wrath the thunder speaks ;
Whose bow of anger shoots the lightning shafts,
To blast the works of man ; .. behold this child !
O, strong to bless, and mighty to destroy,
Tlaloc ! behold thy victim ! so mayest thou
Lay by the fiery arrows of thy rage,
And bid the genial rains and dews descend.

O thou, Companion of the powerful God !
Companion and Beloved ! .. when he treads
The mountain-top, whose breath diffuses round
The sweets of summer ; when he rides the waves,
Whose presence is the sunshine and the calm, ..
Aiaub, O green-robed Goddess, see this child !
Behold thy victim ! so mayest thou appease
The sterner mind of Tlaloc, when he frowns,
And Aztlan flourish in thy fostering smile.

Young Spirits ! ye whom Aztlan's piety
Hath given to Tlaloc, to enjoy with him,
For aye, the cool delights of Tlalocan, ..

XII. 276

Young Spirits of the happy ! who have left
Your Heaven to-day, unseen assistants here, ...
Behold your comrade ! see the chosen child,
Who through the lonely cave of death must pass,
Like you, to join you in eternal joy.

Now, from the rush-strewn temple they depart.
They place their smiling victim in a car,
Upon whose sides of pearly shell there played,
Shading and shifting still, the rainbow light.
On virgin shoulders is he borne aloft,
With dance before, and song and music round ;
And thus they seek, in festival array,
The water-side. There lies the sacred bark,
All gay with gold, and garlanded with flowers :
The virgins with the joyous boy embark ;
Ten boatmen urge them on ; the Priests behind
Follow, and all the long solemnity.
The lake is overspread with boats ; the sun
Shines on the gilded prows, the feathery crowns,
The sparkling waves. Green islets float along,
Where high-born damsels, under jasmin bowers,
Raise the sweet voice, to which the echoing oars,
In modulated motion, rise and fall.
The moving multitude along the shore

XII. 277

Flows like a stream; bright shines the unclouded sky;
Heaven, earth, and waters wear one face of joy.
Young Hoel with delight beholds the pomp;
His heart throbs joyfully; and if he thinks
Upon his mother now, 'tis but to think
How beautiful a tale for her glad ear
He hath on his return. Meantime, the maids
Weave garlands for his head, and pour the song.

Oh, happy thou, whom early from the world
The Gods require! not by the wasting worm
Of sorrow cankered, nor condemned to feel
The pang of sickness, nor the wound of war,
Nor the long miseries of protracted age,
But called in youth, the chosen of the God;
To share his joys. Soon shall thy rescued soul,
Child of the Stranger! in his blissful world,
Mix with the blessed spirits; for not thine,
Amid the central darkness of the earth,
To endure the eternal void; ... not thine to live,
Dead to all objects of eye, ear, or sense,
In the long horrors of one endless night,
With endless being curst. For thee the bowers
Of Tlalocan have blossomed with new sweets;
For thee have its immortal trees matured

XII. 278

The fruits of Heaven ; thy comrades even now
Wait thee, impatient, in their fields of bliss ;
The God will welcome thee, his chosen child,
And Aiah love thee with a mother's love.
Child of the Stranger ! dreary is thy way !
Darkness and Famine through the cave of Death
Must guide thee. Happy thou, when on that night
The morning of the eternal day shall dawn.

So as they sung young Hoel's song of death,
With rapid strength the boatmen plied their oars,
And through the water swift they glided on.
And now to shore they drew. The stately bank
Rose, with the majesty of woods o'erhung,
And rocks, or peering through the forest shade,
Or rising from the lake, and with their bulk
Glassing its dark deep waters. Half way up,
A cavern pierced the rock ; no human foot
Had trod its depths, nor ever sunbeam pierced
Its long recesses and mysterious gloom.
To Tlaloc it was hallowed ; and the stone,
Which closed its entrance, never was removed,
Save when the yearly festival returned,
And in its womb a child was sepulchred,
The living victim. Up the winding path,

XII. 279

That to the entrance of the cavern led,
With many a painful step, the train ascend:
But many a time, upon that long ascent,
Young Hoel would have paused, with weariness
Exhausted now. They urge him on, .. poor child!
They urge him on! .. Where is Cadwallon's aid?
Where is the sword of Ririd? where the arm
Of Madoc now? .. Oh! better had he lived,
Unknowing and unknown, on Arvon's plain,
And trod upon his noble father's grave,
With peasant feet, unconscious! .. They have reached
The cavern now, and from its mouth the Priests
Roll the huge portal. Thitherward they force
The son of Llaian. A cold air comes out; ..
It chills him, and his feet recoil; .. in vain
His feet recoil; .. in vain he turns to fly,
Affrighted at the sudden gloom that spreads
Around; .. the den is closed, and he is left
In solitude and darkness, .. left to die!

XIII.

That morn. from Aztlan Coastel had gone,
In search of flowers, amid the woods and crags,
To deck the shrine of Coatlantona ;
Such flowers, as in the solitary wilds
Hiding their modest beauty, made their worth
More valued for its rareness. 'Twas to her
A grateful task ; not only for she fled
Those cruel rites, to which nor reverent use
Nor frequent custom could familiarize
Her gentle heart, and teach it to put off
All womanly feeling ; . . but that from all eyes
Escaped, and all obtrusive fellowship,
She, in that solitude, might send her soul
To where Lincoya with the Strangers dwelt.
She, from the summit of the woodland heights,
Gazed on the lake below. The sound of song
And instrument, in softened harmony,

Had reached her where she strayed ; and she beheld
 The pomp, and listened to the harmony,
 A moment, with delight : but then a fear
 Came on her, for she knew with what design
 The Tyger and Ocelopan had sought
 The dwellings of the Cymry. . . Now the boats
 Drew nearer, and she knew the Stranger's child.
 She watched them land below ; she saw them wind
 The ascent : . . and now from that abhorred cave
 The stone is rolled away, . . and now the child
 From light and life is caverned, Coatel
 Thought of his mother then, of all the ills
 Her fear would augur, and how worse than all
 Which even a mother's maddening fear could feign,
 His dreadful fate. She thought of this, and bowed
 Her face upon her knees, and closed her eyes,
 Shuddering. Suddenly in the brake beside,
 A rustling startled her, and from the shrubs,
 A Vulture rose.

She moved toward the spot,
 Led by an idle impulse, as it seemed,
 To view from whence the carrion bird had fled.
 The bushes overhung a narrow chasm,
 Which pierced the hill ; upon its mossy sides
 Shade-loving herbs and flowers luxuriant grew :

And jutting crags made easy the descent.
 A little way descending, Coatel
 Stoopt for the flowers, and heard, or thought she heard,
 A feeble sound below. She raised her head,
 And anxiously she listened for the sound,
 Not without fear. . . Feebly again, and like
 A distant cry, it came; and then she thought,
 Perhaps it was the voice of that poor child,
 By the slow pain of hunger doomed to die.
 She shuddered at the thought, and gave a groan
 Of unavailing pity; . . but the sound
 Came nearer, and her trembling heart conceived
 A dangerous hope. The Vulture from that chasm
 Had fled, perchance accustomed in the cave
 To seek his banquet, and by living feet
 Alarmed: . . there was an entrance then below;
 And were it possible that she could save
 The Stranger's child, . . . Oh what a joy it were
 To tell Lincoya that!

It was a thought
 Which made her heart, with terror and delight,
 Throb audibly. From crag to crag she past
 Descending, and beheld a narrow cave
 Enter the hill. A little way the light
 Fell, . . but its feeble glimmering she herself

XIII. 283

Obstructed half, as, stooping, in she went.
The arch grew loftier, and the increasing gloom
Filled her with more affright; and now she paused;
For at a sudden and abrupt descent
She stood, and feared its unseen depth; her heart
Failed, and she back had hastened; but the cry
Reached her again, the near and certain cry
Of that most pitiable innocent.
Again adown the dark descent she looked,
Straining her sight; by this the strengthened sight
Had grown adapted to the gloom around,
And her dilated pupils now received
Dim sense of objects near. Something below,
White, in the darkness lay: it marked the depth.
Still Coatel stood dubious; but she heard
The wailing of the child, and his loud sobs; ..
Then, clinging to the rock, with fearful hands,
Her feet explored below, and twice she felt
Firm footing, ere her fearful hold relaxed.
The sound she made, along the hollow rock
Ran echoing. Hoel heard it, and he came
Groping along the side. A dim dim light
Broke on the darkness of his sepulchre.
A human form drew near him; .. he sprang on,
Screaming with joy, and clung to Coatel,

XIII. 284

And cried, Oh take me from this dismal place!
She answered not; she understood him not;
But clasped the little victim to her breast,
And shed delightful tears.

But from that den
Of darkness and of horror, Coatel
Durst not convey the child, though in her heart
There was a female tenderness that yearned,
Even with maternal love, to cherish him.
She hushed his clamours, fearful lest the sound
Might reach some other ear; she kissed away
The tears, that streamed adown his little cheeks;
She gave him food, which in the morn she brought,
For her own wants, from Aztlan. Some few words
Of Britain's ancient language she had learnt
From her *Lincoya*, in those happy days
Of peace, when Aztlan was the Strangers' friend.
Aptly she learnt, what willingly he taught,
Terms of endearment, and the parting words
Which promised quick return. She on the child
The endearing phrase bestowed; and if it chanced
Imperfect knowledge, or some difficult sound
Checked her heart's utterance, then the gentle tone,
The fond caress, intelligibly spake
Affection's language.

XIII. 285

But when she arose,
And would have climbed the ascent, the affrighted boy
Close clasped her, and his tears interpreted
The prayer to leave him not. Again she kissed
His tears away ; again of soon return
Assured and soothed him ; till, reluctantly
And weeping, but in silence, he unloosed,
His grasp ; and up the difficult ascent
Coatel climbed, and to the light of day
Returning, with her flowers she hastened home.

XIV.

Who comes to Aztlan, bounding like a deer
Along the plain? .. The herald of success ;
For lo ! his locks are braided, and his loins
Cinctured with white; and see, he lifts the shield,
And brandishes the sword. The populace
Flock round, impatient for the tale of joy,
And follow to the palace in his path.
Joy! joy ! the Tyger hath atchieved his quest!
They bring a captive home ! ... Triumphantly
Coanocotzin and his Chiefs go forth
To greet the youth triumphant, and receive
The victim whom the gracious Gods have given,
Sure omen and first fruits of victory.
A woman leads the train, young, beautiful, ..
More beautiful for that translucent joy,
Flushing her cheek, and sparkling in her eye ; ..
Her hair is twined with festal flowers, her robe

XIV. 287

With flowing wreaths adorned; she holds a child,
He, too, bedecked and garlanded with flowers;
And, lifting him with agile force of arms,
In graceful action, to harmonious step
Accordant, leads the dance. It is the wife
Of Tlalala, who, with his child, goes forth
To meet her hero husband.

And behold

The Tyger comes! and ere the shouts and sounds
Of gratulation cease, his followers bear
The captive Prince. At that so welcome sight
Loud rose the glad acclaim; nor knew they yet
That he, who there lay patient in his bonds,
Expecting the inevitable lot,
Was Madoc. Patient in his bonds he lay,
Exhausted with vain efforts, desperate now,
And silently resigned. But when the King
Approached the prisoner, and beheld his face,
And knew the Chief of Strangers, at that sound
Electric joy shot through the multitude,
And, like the raging of the hurricane,
Their thundering transports pealed. A deeper joy,
A nobler triumph kindled Tlalala,
As, limb by limb, his eye surveyed the Prince,
With a calm fierceness. And by this the Priests

XIV. 288

Approached their victim, clad in vestments white
Of sacrifice, which from the shoulders fell,
As from the breast, unbending, broad and straight,
Leaving their black arms bare. The blood-red robe,
The turquoise pendant from his down-drawn lip,
The crown of glossy plumage, whose green hue
Vied with his emerald ear-drops, marked their Chief,
Tezozomoc: his thin and ghastly cheek,
Which, . . . save the temple serpents, when he brought
Their human banquet, . . . never living eye
Rejoiced to see, became more ghastly now,
As, in Mexitli's name, upon the Prince
He laid his murderous hand. But as he spake,
Updarted Tlalala his eagle glance . . .
Away! away! he shall not perish so!
The warrior cried. . . Not tamely, by the knife,
Nor on the jasper-stone, his blood shall flow!
The Gods of Aztlan love a Warrior-Priest!
I am their Priest to-day!

A murmuring

Ran through the train; nor waited he to hear
Denial thence; but on the multitude
Aloud he called. . . When first our fathers seized
This land, there was a savage Chief who stopt
Their progress. He had gained the rank he bore,

XIV. 289

By long probation : stripes, which laid his flesh
 All bleeding bare, had forced not one complaint ;
 Not, when the working bowels might be seen,
 One movement: hand-bound, he had been confined -
 Where myriad insects on his nakedness
 Infix'd their venomous anger, and no start,
 No shudder, shook his frame : last, in a net
 Suspended, he had felt the agony
 Of fire, which to his bones and marrow pierced,
 And breathed the suffocating smoke which filled
 His lungs with fire, without a groan, a breath,
 A look betokening sense ; so gallantly
 Had he subdued his nature. This brave man
 Met Aztlan in the war, and put her Chiefs
 To shame. Our Elders have not yet forgot
 How from the slaughtered brother of their King
 He stript the skin, and formed of it a drum,
 Whose sound affrighted armies. With this man
 My father coped in battle ; here he led him,
 An offering to the God ; and, man to man,
 He slew him here in fight. I was a child,
 Just old enough to lift my father's shield ;
 But I remember, on that glorious day,
 When from the sacred combat he returned,
 His red hands reeking with the hot heart's-blood,

How in his arms he took me, and besought
 The God whom he had served, to bless his boy,
 And make me like my father. Men of Aztlan!
 Mexitli heard his prayer! . . . Here I have brought
 The Stranger-Chief, the noblest sacrifice
 That ever graced the altar of the God;
 Let, then, his death be noble! So my boy
 Shall, in the day of battle, think of me;
 And, as I followed my brave father's steps,
 Pursue my path of glory.

Ere the Priest
 Could frame denial, had the Monarch's look
 Bespake assent. . . Refuse not this, he cried,
 O Servant of the Gods! He hath not here
 His arms to save him; and the Tyger's strength
 Yields to no mortal might. Then for his sword
 He called, and bade Yubidthiton address
 The Stranger-Chief.

Yudidthiton began,
 The Gods of Aztlan triumph, and thy blood
 Must wet their altars. Prince, thou shalt not die
 The coward's death; but, sworded, and in fight,
 Fall as becomes the valiant. Should thine arm
 Subdue, in battle, six successive foes,
 Life, liberty, and glory, will repay

XIV. 291

The noble conquest. Madoc, hope not this!
Strong are the brave of Aztlan!

Then they loosed

The Ocean Chieftain's bonds ; they rent away
His garments ; and, with songs and shouts of joy,
They led him to the Stone of Sacrifice.
Round was that Stone of blood ; the half-raised arm
Of one of manly growth, who stood below,
Might rest upon its height ; the circle small ;
An active boy might almost bound across.
Nor needed, for the combat, ampler space ;
For in the centre was the prisoner's foot
Fast fettered down. Thus fettered, Madoc stood.
He held a buckler, light and small, of cane
O'erlaid with beaten gold ; his sword the King,
Honouring a noble enemy, had given,
A weapon tried in war, . . to Madoc's grasp
Strange and unwieldy : 'twas a broad strong staff,
Set thick with transverse stones, on either side
Keen-edged as Syrian steel. But when he felt
The weapon, Madoc called to mind his deeds
Done on the Saxon in his father's land,
And hope arose within him. Nor, though now
Naked he stood, did fear, for that, assail
His steady heart ; for often had he seen

XIV. 292

His gallant' countrymen, with naked breasts,
Rush on their iron coated enemy,
And win the conquest.

Now hath Tlalala
Arrayed himself for battle. First he donned
A gipion, quilted close of gossampine ;
O'er that, a jointed mail of plates of gold,
Bespotted like the tyger's speckled pride,
To speak his rank ; it clad his arms half-way,
Half-way, his thighs ; but cuishes had he none,
Nor gauntlets, nor feet-armour. On his helm
There yawned the semblance of a tyger's head,
The long white teeth extended, as for prey ;
Proud crest, to blazon his proud title forth.
And now toward the fatal stage, equipped
For war, he went ; when, from the press behind,
A warrior's voice was heard, and, clad in arms,
And shaking, in his angry grasp, the sword,
Ocelopan rushed on, and called aloud
On Tlalala, and claimed the holy fight.
The Tyger, heedless of his clamour, sprung
Upon the stone, and turned him to the war.
Fierce leaping forward came Ocelopan,
And bounded up the ascent, and seized his arm : ..
Why wouldst thou rob me of a deed like this ?

XIV. 293

Equal our peril in the enterprize,
Equal our merit; .. thou wouldst reap alone
The guerdon! Never shall my children lift
Their little hands at thee, and say, Lo! there
The Chief who slew the White King! .. Tlalala,
Trust to the lot, or turn on me, and prove,
By the best chance to which the brave appeal,
Who best deserves this glory!

Stung by wrath,
The Tyger answered not; he raised his sword,
And they had rushed to battle; but the Priests
Came hastening up, and by their common Gods,
And by their common country, bade them cease
Their impious strife, and let the lot decide
From whom Mexitli should that day receive
His noble victim. Both unsatisfied,
But both obedient, heard. Two equal shafts,
As outwardly they seemed, the Paba brought;
His mantle hid their points; and Tlalala
Drew forth the broken stave. A bitter smile
Darkened his cheek, as, angrily, he cast
To earth the hostile lot. .. Shedder of Blood,
Thine is the first adventure! he exclaimed;
But thou mayest perish here! .. and, in his heart,
The Tyger hoped Ocelopan might fall,

XIV. 294

As, sullenly retiring from the stage,
He mingled with the crowd.

And now opposed
In battle, on the stone of sacrifice,
Prince Madoc and the Life-Destroyer stood.
This, clad in arms complete, free to advance
In quick assault, or shun the threatened blow,
Wielding his wonted sword; the other, stript,
Save of that fragile shield, of all defence;
His weapon strange and cumbrous; and pinned down,
Disabled from all onset, all retreat.

With looks of greedy joy, Ocelopan
Surveyed his foe, and wondered to behold
The breast so broad, the bare and brawny limbs,
Of matchless strength. The eye of Madoc, too,
Dwelt on his foe; his countenance was calm,
Something more pale than wonted, like a man
Prepared to meet his death. The Azteca
Fiercely began the fight; now here, now there,
Aright, aleft, above, below, he wheeled
The rapid sword: still Madoc's rapid eye,
Pursued the motion, and his ready shield,
In prompt interposition, caught the blow,
Or turned its edge aside. Nor did the Prince

XIV. 295

Yet aim the sword to wound, but held it forth,
 Another shield, to save him, till his hand,
 Familiar with its weight, and shape uncouth,
 Might wield it well to vengeance. Thus stood he,
 Baffling the impatient enemy, who now
 Waxed wrathful, thus to waste in idle strokes,
 Reiterate so oft, his bootless strength.
 And now yet more exasperate he grew ;
 For, from the eager multitude, was heard,
 Amid the din of undistinguished sounds,
 The 'Tyger's murmuréd name, as though they thought,
 Had he been on the stone, ere this, besure,
 The Gods had tasted of their sacrifice,
 Now all too long delayed. Then fiercelier,
 And yet more rapidly, he drove the sword ;
 But still the wary Prince or met its fall,
 And broke the force, or bent him from the blow ;
 And now retiring, and advancing now,
 As one free foot permitted, still provoked,
 And baffled still, the savage ; and sometimes,
 With cautious strength, did Madoc aim attack,
 Mastering each moment now with abler sway
 The acquainted sword. But, though as yet unharmed
 In life or limb, more perilous the strife
 Grew momentarily ; for, with repeated strokes,

XIV. 296

Battered and broken now, the shield hung loose;
And shouts of triumph from the multitude
Arose, as, piece-meal, they beheld it fall,
And saw the Prince exposed.

That welcome sight,
Those welcome sounds, inspired Ocelopan;
He felt each limb new-strung. Impatient now
Of conquest long delayed, with wilder rage
He drives the weapon: Madoc's lifted sword
Received its edge, and shivered with the blow.
A shriek of transport burst from all around;
For lo! the White King, shieldless, weaponless,
Naked before his foe! That savage foe,
Dallying with the delight of victory,
Drew back a moment, to enjoy the sight,
Then yelled in triumph, and sprang on to give
The consummating blow. Madoc beheld
The coming death; he darted up his hand,
Instinctively, to save, and caught the wrist
In its mid fall, and drove, with desperate force,
The splintered truncheon of his broken sword
Full in the enemy's face. Beneath his eye
It broke its way, and, where the nasal nerves
Branch, in fine fibrils, o'er their mazy seat,
Burst through, and, slanting upward, in the brain
Buried its jagged point.

XIV. 297

Madoc himself

Stood at his fall astonished, at escape
Unhoped, and strange success. The multitude
Beheld, and they were silent, and they stood
Gazing in terror. But far other thoughts
Rose in the Tyger's heart ; it was a joy
To Tlalala ; and forth he sprung, and up
The Stone of Sacrifice, and called aloud
To bring the Prince another sword and shield,
For his last strife. Then, in that interval,
Upon Ocelopan he fixed his eyes,
Contemplating the dead, as though thereby
To kindle in his heart a fiercer thirst
For vengeance. Nor to Madoc was the sting
Of anger wanting, when, in Tlalala,
He knew the captive whom his mercy freed,
The man whose ambush had that day destroyed
Young Hoel and himself ; .. for, sure, he deemed
Young Hoel was with God, and he himself
At his death-day arrived. And now he graspt
A second sword, and held again the shield ;
And from the Stone of Blood Ocelopan
Was borne away ; and, fresh in arms, and fierce
With all that makes a savage thirst for war,
Hope, vengeance, courage, superstitious hate,

A second foe came on. By this the Prince
 Could wield his weapon well ; and dreading now
 Lest, in protracted combat, he should stand
 Again defenceless, he put forth his strength,
 As oft assailing as assailed, and watched
 So well the Tyger's motions, and received
 The Tyger's blows so warily, and aimed
 His own so fierce and fast, that in the crowd
 Doubt and alarm prevailed. Ilanquel grew
 Pale at her husband's danger ; and she clasped
 The infant to her breast, whom late she held
 On high, to see his victory. The throng
 Of the beholders silently looked on ;
 And in their silence might at times be heard
 An indrawn breath of terror ; and the Priests
 Angrily murmured, that, in evil hour,
 Coanocotzin had indulged the pride
 Of vaunting valour, and from certain death
 Reprieved the foe.

But now a murmur rose
 Amid the multitude ; and they who stood
 So thickly thronged, and with such eager eyes
 Late watched the fight, hastily now broke up,
 And, with disordered speed and sudden arms,
 Ran to the city gates. More eager now,

XIV. 299

Conscious of what had chanced, fought Tlalala ;
And hope invigorated Madoc's heart ;
For well he weened Cadwallon was at hand,
Leading his gallant friends. Aright he weened !
At hand Cadwallon was ! His gallant friends
Came from their mountains with impetuous speed,
To save or to revenge. Nor long endured
The combat now : the Priests ascend the stone,
And bid the Tyger hasten to defend
His country and his Gods ; and, hand and foot,
Binding the captive Prince, they bear him thence,
And lay him in the temple. Then his heart
Resigned itself to death, and Madoc thought
Of Llaian and Goervyl ; and he felt
That death was dreadful. But not so the King
Permitted ; but not so had God decreed ;
For noble was the King of Aztlan's heart,
And pure his tongue from falsehood : he had said,
That by the warrior's death should Madoc die ;
Nor dared the Pabas violently break
The irrevocable word. There Madoc lay
In solitude ; the distant battle reached
His ear ; inactive and in bonds he lay,
Expecting the dread issue, and almost
Wished for the perils of the fight again.

XV.

Not unprepared Cadwallon found the sons
Of Aztlan, nor defenceless were her walls ;
But when the Britons' distant march was seen,
A ready army issued from her gates,
And dight themselves to battle : these the King
Coanocotzin had, with timely care,
And provident for danger, thus arrayed.
Forth issuing from the gates, they met the foe,
And with the sound of sonorous instruments,
And with their shouts and screams and yells, drove back
The Britons' fainter war-cry, as the swell
Of ocean, flowing onward, up its course
Forces the river-stream. Their darts and stones
Fell like the rain-drops of the summer-shower,
So fast ; and on the helmet and the shield,
On the strong corselet and the netted mail,
So innocent they fell. But not in vain

XV. 301

The bowmen of Deheubarth sent, that day,
Their iron bolts abroad ; those winged deaths
Descended on the naked multitude,
And through the chieftain's quilted gossampine,
Through feathery breastplate, and effulgent gold,
They reached the life.

But soon no interval
For archer's art was left, nor scope for flight
Of stone from whirling sling : both hosts, alike
Impatient for the proof of war, press on ;
The Aztecas, to shun the arrowy storm,
The Cymry, to release their Lord, or heap
Aztlan in ruins, for his monument.
Spear against spear, and shield to shield, and breast
To breast, they met ; equal in force of limb
And strength of heart, in resolute resolve,
And stubborn effort of determined wrath :
The few, advantaged by their iron mail ;
The weaker armed, of near retreat assured,
And succour close at hand, in tenfold troops
Their foemen outnumbering. And of all
That mighty multitude, did every man
Of either host, alike inspired by all
That stings to will, and strengthens to perform,
Then put forth all his power ; for well they knew

Aztlan that day must triumph or must fall,
Then sword and mace on helm and buckler rang,
And hurtling javelins whirred along the sky.
Nor when they hurled the javelin, did the sons
Of Aztlan, prodigal of weapons, loose
The lance, to serve them for no second stroke ;
A line of ample measure still retained
The missile shaft ; and when the blow was spent,
Swiftly the dexterous spearmen coiled the string,
And sped again the artificer of death.
Rattling, like summer hailstones, they descend,
But from the Britons' iron panoply,
Baffled and blunted, fell ; nor more availed
The stony falchion there, whose broken edge
Inflicts no second wound ; nor profited,
On the strong buckler, or the crested helm,
The knotty club ; though fast, in blinding showers,
Those javelins fly, those heavy weapons fall
With stunning weight. Meantime, with wonted strength
The men of Gwyneth through their fenceless foes
Those lances thrust, whose terrors had so oft
Affrayed the Saxons, and whose home-driven points
So oft had pierced the Normen's knightly arms.
Little did then his pomp of plumes bestead
The Azteca, or glittering pride of gold,

Against the tempered sword ; little his casque,
Gay with its feathery coronal, or drest
In graven terrors, when the Briton's hand
Drove in, through helm and head, the spiked mace ;
Or swung its iron weights, with shattering sway,
Which where they fell destroyed. Beneath those arms
The men of Aztlan sunk ; and whoso dropt,
Dead or disabled, him his comrades bore
Away, with instant caution, lest the sight
Of those whom they had slaughtered might inspire
The foe with hope and courage. Fast they fell,
And fast were resupplied, man after man
Succeeding to the death. Nor in the town
Did now the sight of their slain countrymen,
Momently carried in, and piled in heaps,
Create one thought of fear. Hark ! through the streets
Of Aztlan, how from house to house, and tower
To tower reiterate, Paynalton's name
Calls all her sons to battle ! at whose name
All must go forth, and follow to the field
The Leader of the Armies of the Gods,
Whom, in his unseen power, Mexitli now
Sends out to lead his people. They, in crowds,
Throng for their weapons to the House of Arms,
Beneath their guardian Deity preserved,

Through years of peace ; and there the Pabas stood
 Within the temple-court, and dealt around
 The ablution of the Stone of Sacrifice,
 Bidding them, with the holy beverage,
 Imbibe diviner valour, strength of arm
 Not to be wearied, hope of victory,
 And certain faith of endless joy in Heaven,
 Their sure reward. . . Oh ! happy, cried the Priests,
 Your brethren who have fallen ! already they
 Have joined the company of blessed souls ;
 Already they, with song and harmony,
 And in the dance of beauty, are gone forth,
 To follow, down his western path of light,
 Yon Sun, the Prince of Glory, from the world
 Retiring, to the palace of his rest.

Oh, happy they, who for their country's cause,
 And for their Gods, shall die the brave man's death !
 Them will their country consecrate with praise !
 Them will the Gods reward ! . . They heard the Priests,
 Intoxicate, and from the gate swarmed out,
 Tumultuous to the fight of martyrdom.

But when Cadwallon, every moment, saw
 The enemies increase, and with what rage
 Of drunken valour to the fight they rushed,

He, against that impetuous attack,
As best he could, providing, formed the troops
Of Britain into one collected mass.
Three equal sides it offered to the foe,
Close and compact ; no multitude could break
The condensed strength : its narrow point prest on,
Entering the throng's resistance, like a wedge,
Still from behind impelled. So thought the Chief
Likeliest the gates of Aztlan might be gained,
And Hoel and the Prince preserved, if yet
They were among mankind. Nor could the force
Of hostile thousands break that strength condensed,
Against whose iron sides the stream of war
Rolled unavailing, as the ocean waves,
Which, idly, round some insulated rock,
Foam furious, warning, with their silvery smoke,
The mariner far off. Nor could the point
Of that compacted body, though it bore
Right on the foe, and, with united force,
Pressed on to enter, through the multitude
Win now its difficult way ; as where the sea
Pours through some strait its violent waters, swollen
By inland fresh, vainly the oarmen there,
With all their weight and strength, essay to drive
Their galley through the pass, the stress and strain
Availing scarce to stem the impetuous stream.

And hark ! above the deafening din of fight
Another shout, heard like the thunder-peal,
Amid the war of winds ! Lincoya comes,
Leading the mountain-dwellers. From the shock
Aztlan recoiled. And now a second troop
Of Britons to the town advanced, for war
Impatient, and revenge. Cadwallon these,
With tidings of their gallant Prince enthralled,
Had summoned from the ships. That dreadful tale
Roused them to fury. Not a man was left
To guard the fleet ; for who could have endured
That idle duty ? who could have endured
The long, inactive, miserable hours,
And hope, and expectation, and the rage
Of maddening anguish ? Ririd led them on ;
In whom a brother's love had called not up
More spirit-stirring pain, than trembled now
In every British heart ; so dear to all
Was Madoc. On they came ; and Aztlan then
Had fled appalled ; but, in that dangerous hour
Her faith preserved her. From the gate, her Priests
Rushed desperate out, and to the foremost rank
Forced their wild way, and fought with martyr zeal.
Through all the host contagious fury spread :
Nor had the sight that hour enabled them

XV. 307

To mightier efforts, had Mexitli, clad
In all his imaged terrors, gone before
Their way, and driven upon his enemies
His giant club, destroying. Then more fierce
The conflict grew ; the din of arms, the yell
Of savage rage, the shriek of agony,
The groan of death, commingled in one sound
Of undistinguished horrors ; while the Sun,
Retiring slow beneath the plain's far verge,
Shed o'er the quiet hills his fading light.

XVI.

Silent and solitary is thy vale,
Caermadoc! and how melancholy now
That solitude and silence! . . . broad noon-day,
And not a sound of human life is there!
The fisher's net, abandoned in his haste,
Sways idly in the waters; in the tree,
Which its last stroke had pierced, the hatchet hangs;
The birds, beside the mattock and the spade,
Hunt in the new-turned mould, and fearlessly
Fly through the cage-work of the imperfect wall;
Or through the vacant dwelling's open door,
Pass and repass secure.

In Madoc's house,
And on his bed of reeds, Goervyl lies,
Her face toward the ground. She neither weeps,
Nor sighs, nor groans; too strong her agony

XVI. 309

For outward sign of anguish, and for prayer.
Too hopeless was the ill : and though, at times,
The pious exclamation past her lips,
Thy will be done ! yet was that utterance
Rather the breathing of a broken heart,
Than of a soul resigned. Mervyn, beside,
Hangs over his dear mistress silently,
Having no hope nor comfort to bestow,
Nor aught but sobs, and unavailing tears.
The women of Caermadoc, like a flock
Collected in their panic, stand around
The house of their lost leader ; and they, too,
Are mute in their despair. Llaian alone
Is absent, wildly hath she wandered forth,
To seek her child ; and such the general woe,
That none hath marked her absence : yet have they,
Though unprotected thus, no selfish fear ;
The sudden evil had destroyed all thought,
All sense, of present danger to themselves,
All foresight.

Yet new terrors ! Malinal,
Panting with speed, bursts in, and takes the arms
Of Madoc down. Goervyl, at that sound,
Started in sudden hope ; but when she saw
The Azteca, she uttered a faint scream

Of wrongful fear, remembering not the proofs
 Of his tried truth, nor recognizing aught
 In those known features, save their hostile hue.
 But he, by worser fear abating soon
 Her vain alarm, exclaimed, I saw a band
 Of Hoamen coming up the straits, for ill,
 Besure, for Amalahta leads them on.
 Buckle this harness on, that, being armed,
 I may defend the entrance.

Scarce had she

Fastened the breast-plate with her trembling hands,
 When, flying from the sight of men in arms,
 The women crowded in. Hastily he seized
 The shield and spear, and on the threshold took
 His stand; but, wakened now to provident thought,
 Goervyl, following, helmed him. There was now
 No time to gird the bauldric on; she held
 Her brother's sword, and bade him look to her
 For prompt supply of weapons; in herself
 Being resolved not idly to abide,
 Nor unprepared of hand or heart to meet
 The issue of the danger, nor to die
 Reluctant now.

Rightly had they divined

The Hoaman's felon purpose. When he heard

XVI. 311

The fate of Madoc, from his mother's eye
He masked his secret joy, and took his arms,
And to the rescue, with the foremost band,
Set forth. But soon, upon the way, he told
The associates of his crime, that now their hour
Of triumph was arrived ; Caermadoc, left
Defenceless, would become, with all its wealth,
The spoilers' easy prey, raiment and arms
And iron ; skins of that sweet beverage,
Which to a sense of its own life could stir
The joyful blood ; the women, above all,
Whom to the forest they might bear away,
To be their slaves, if so their pleasure was ;
Or, yielding them to Aztlan, for such prize
Receive a royal guerdon. Twelve there were,
Long leagued him in guilt, who turned aside.
And they have reached Caermadoc now, and now
Rush onward, where they see the women fly ;
When, on the threshold, clad in Cimbric arms,
And with long lance protended, Malinal
Rebuffs them from the entrance. At that sight
Suddenly quailed, they stood, as midnight thieves
Who find the master waking ; but ere long,
Gathering assured courage, as they saw
No other guard, pressed forward, and essayed

To turn his spear aside. Its steady point,
True to the impelling strength, held on, and thrust
The foremost through the breast, and breath and blood
Followed the re-drawn shaft. Nor seemed the strife
Unequal now, though, with their numbers, they
Beleaguered in half-ring the door, where he,
The sole defender, stood. From side to side,
So well and swiftly did he veer the lance,
That every enemy beheld its point
Aimed at himself direct. But chief on one
Had Malinal his deadly purpose fixed,
On Amalahta ; by his death to quell
The present danger, and cut off the root
Of many an evil, certain else to spring
From that accursed stock. On him his eye
Turned with more eager wilfulness, and dwelt
With keener ken ; and now, with sudden step
Bending his body on, at him he drives
The meditated blow : but that ill Prince,
As chiefly sought, so chiefly fearing, swerved
Timely aside ; and ere the Azteca
Recovered from the frustrate aim, the spear
Was seized, and from his hold, by stress and weight
Of numbers, wrenched. He, facing still the foe,
And holding at arms-length the targe, put back

His hand, and called Goervyl, and from her
 Received the sword ; . . in time, for the enemy
 Prest on so near, that having now no scope
 To raise his arm, he drove the blade straight on.
 It entered at the mouth of one who stood
 With face aslant, and glanced along the teeth,
 Through to the ear, then, slivering downward, left
 The cheek-flap dangling. He, in that same point
 Of time, as if a single impulse gave
 Birth to the double action, dashed his shield
 Against another's head, with so fierce swing
 And sway of strength, that this third enemy
 Fell at his feet. Astounded by such proof
 Of prowess, and by unexpected loss
 Dismayed, the foe gave back, beyond the reach
 Of his strong arm ; and there awhile they stood,
 Beholding him at bay, and counselling
 How best to work their vengeance upon him,
 Their sole opponent. Soon did they behold
 The vantage, overlooked by hasty hope,
 How vulnerable he stood, his arms and thighs
 Bare for their butt. At once they bent their bows ;
 At once ten arrows fled : seven, shot in vain,
 Rung on his shield ; but, with unhappier mark,
 Two shafts hung quivering in his leg ; a third

XVI. 314

Below the shoulder pierced. Then Malinal
Groaned, not for anguish of his wounds, but grief
And agony of spirit; yet, resolved
To his last gasp to guard that precious post,
Nor longer able to endure afoot,
He, falling on his knees, received, unharmed,
Upon the shield, now ample for defence,
Their second shower, and still defied the foe.
But they, now sure of conquest, hasten on,
To thrust him down, and he, too, felt his strength
Ebbing away. Goervyl, in that hour
Of horror and despair, collected still,
Caught him, and by the shoulders drew him in;
And, calling on her comrades, with their help
Shut to the door in time, and with their weight
Secured it, not their strength; for she alone,
Found worthy of her noble ancestry,
In this emergence, felt her faculties
All present, and heroic strength of heart,
To cope with danger, and contempt of death.
Shame on ye, British women! shame! exclaimed
The daughter of King Owen, as she saw
The trembling hands and bloodless countenance,
Pale as sepulchral marble; silent some;
Others, with womanish cries, lamenting now

XVI. 315

That ever, in unhappy hour, they left
Their native land; . . . a pardonable fear ;
For hark ! the war-whoop ! sound, whereto the howl
Of tygers or hyænas, heard at night -
By captive from barbarian foes escaped,
And wandering in the pathless wilderness,
Were music. Shame on ye ! Goervyl cried ;
Think what your fathers were, your husbands what,
And what your sons should be ! These savages
Seek not to wreak on ye immediate death ;
So are ye safe, if safety such as this
Be worth a thought ; and in the interval
We yet may gain, by keeping to the last
This entrance, easily to be maintained
By us, though women, against foes so few.
Who knows what succour chance, or timely thought
Of our own friends may send, or Providence,
Who slumbereth not ? . . . While thus she spake, a hand
In at the window came, of one who sought
That way to win the entrance. She drew out
The arrow through the arm of Malinal,
With gentle care, . . . the readiest weapon that, . . .
And held it short above the bony barb,
And, adding deeds to words, with all her might
She stabbed it through the hand. The sudden pain.

Provoked a cry, and back the savage fell,
 Loosening his hold, and maimed for farther war.
 Nay! leave that entrance open! she exclaimed
 To one who would have closed it, .. who comes next
 Shall not go thence so cheaply! .. for she now
 Had taken up a spear, to guard that way,
 Easily guarded even by female might.
 O heart of proof! what now avails thy worth
 And excellent courage? for the savage foe,
 With mattock and with spade, for other use
 Designed, hew now upon the door, and rend
 The wattled sides; and they within shrink back,
 For now it splinters through, .. and lo, the way
 Is open to the spoiler!

Then once more,
 Collecting his last strength, did Malinal
 Rise on his knees, and over him the maid
 Stands with the ready spear, she guarding him
 Who guarded her so well. Roused to new force
 By that exampled valour, and with will
 To atchieve one service yet before he died,
 If death indeed, as sure he thought, were nigh,
 Malinal gathered up his fainting powers,
 And, reaching forward, with a blow that threw
 His body on, upon the knee he smote

XVI. 317

One Hoaman more, and brought him to the ground.
 The foe fell over him; but he, prepared,
 Threw him with sudden jerk aside, and rose
 Upon one hand, and, with the other, plunged
 Between his ribs the mortal blade. Meantime
 Amalahta, rushing, in blind eagerness,
 To seize Goervyl, set at nought the power
 Of female hand, and, stooping, as he came,
 Beneath her spear-point, thought with lifted arm
 To turn the thrust aside. But she drew back,
 And lowered at once the spear, with aim so sure,
 That on the front it met him, and ploughed up
 The whole scalp-length. He, blinded by the blood,
 Staggered aside, escaping, by that chance,
 A second push, else mortal. And by this,
 The women, learning courage from despair,
 And by Goervyl's bold example fired,
 Took heart, and rushing on with one accord,
 Drove out the foe. Then took they hope; for then
 They saw but seven remain in plight for war;
 And, knowing their own number, in the pride
 Of strength, caught up stones, staves, or axe, or spear,
 To hostile use converting whatsoever
 The hasty hand could seize. Such fierce attack
 Confused the ruffian band; nor had they room

XVI. 318

To aim the arrow, nor to speed the spear,
Each now beset by many. But their Prince,
Still mindful of his purport, called to them, . .
Secure my passage while I bear away
The White King's Sister ! having her, the law
Of peace is in our power. . . And on he went
Toward Goervyl, and, with sudden turn,
While on another foe her eye was fixed,
Ran in upon her, and stoopt down, and claspt
The Maid above the knees, and throwing her
Over his shoulder, to the valley straits
Set off : . . ill seconded in ill attempt ;
For now his comrades are too close beset
To aid their chief, and Mervyn hath beheld
His Lady's peril. At the sight, inspired
With force, as if indeed that manly garb
Had clothed a manly heart, the Page ran on,
And with a bill-hook striking at his ham,
Cut the back-sinews. Amalahta fell ;
The Maid fell with him ; and she first hath risen,
While, grovelling on the earth, he gnashed his teeth
For agony. Yet, even in those pangs,
Remembering still revenge, he turned and seized
Goervyl's skirt, and plucked her to the ground,
And rolled himself upon her, and essayed

XVI. 319

To kneel upon her breast ; but she clenched fast
His bloody locks, and drew him down aside,
Faint now with anguish, and with loss of blood ;
And Mervyn, coming to her help again,
As once again he rose, around the neck
Seized him, with throttling grasp, and held him down, . .
Strange strife and horrible ! . . till Malinal
Crawled to the spot, and thrust into his groin
The mortal sword of Madoc ; he himself,
At the same moment, fainting, now no more
By his strong will upheld, the service done.
The few surviving traitors, at the sight
Of their fallen Prince and Leader, now, too late,
Believed that some diviner power had given
These female arms strength for their overthrow,
Themselves proved weak before them, as, of late,
Their God, by Madoc crushed.

Away they fled

Toward the valley straits ; but in the gorge
Erillyab met their flight ; and then her heart,
Boding the evil, smote her, and she bade
Her people seize, and bring them on in bonds,
For judgment. She herself, with quickened pace,
Advanced, to know the worst ; and o'er the dead
She cast a rapid glance, and knew her son.

XVI. 320

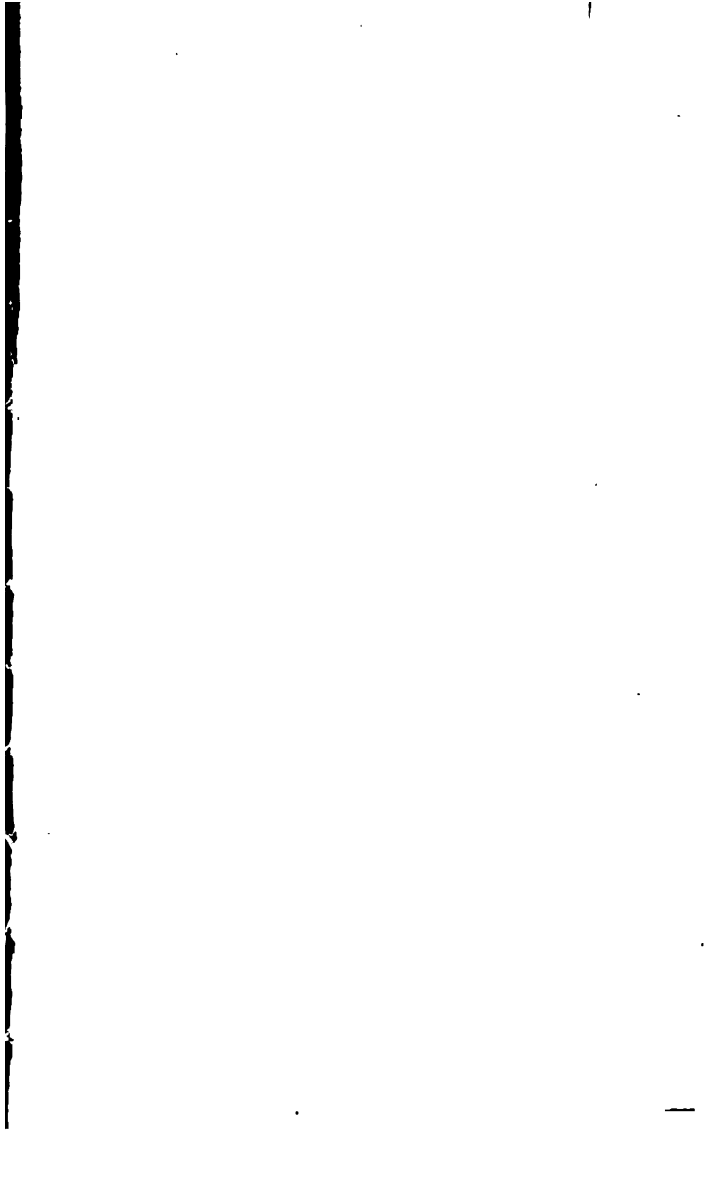
She knew him by his garments, by the work
Of her own hands ; for now his face, besmeared
And black with gore, and stiffened in its pangs,
Bore of the life no semblance. . . God is good !
She cried, and closed her eyelids, and her lips
Shook, and her countenance changed ; but in her heart
She quelled the natural feeling. . . Bear away
These wretches ! . . to her followers she exclaimed ;
And root them from the earth. Then she approached
Goervyl, who was pale and trembling now,
Exhausted with past effort ; and she took
Gently the Maiden's tremulous hand, and said,
God comfort thee, my Sister ! At that voice
Of consolation, from her dreamy state,
Goervyl, to a sense of all her woe,
Awoke, and burst into a gush of tears.
God comfort thee, my Sister ! cried the Queen,
Even as He strengthens me. I would not raise
Deceitful hope, . . but in His hand, even yet,
The issue hangs ; and He is merciful.

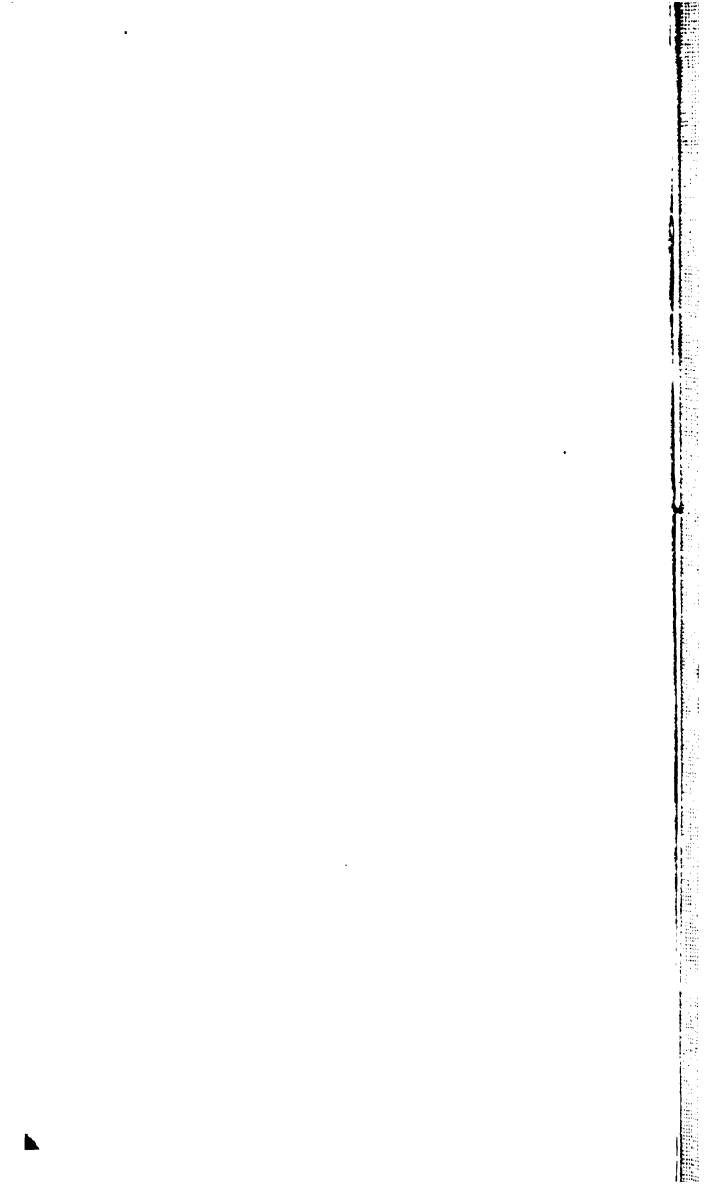
Yea, Daughter of Aberfraw, take thou hope !
For Madoc lives ! . . he lives, to wield the sword
Of righteous vengeance, and accomplish all.

END OF VOL. I.

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